

WHAT IS A WELL-WRITTEN PAPER?

A FORMULA EXISTS IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

Many of our colleagues at A New Leaf are in college so we decided to look at a common stress for college students: writing papers. Typically, the further we go in college, the longer the academic papers seem to get. The longer the papers get the more stress we can have when tackling the process. Just know, there is no set standard for what constitutes a well-written paper. A quick google search will take you in many directions. But there are a few tips that can guide your writing process:

Stay on topic. No matter how it's phrased - clarity, cohesion, purpose - a well-written

paper should stay on topic. When writing, we need to consistently consider our main point and how each corresponding paragraph heightens that point. Creating an outline of your work is a fantastic way to see how everything ties together. Remember, we also want the paper to feel like a natural flow of information. Use your outline to move paragraphs around to get a proper fit.

A syllabus is your best friend. I cannot tell you how often I have had a printed copy of the class syllabus next to me as I write a paper. A syllabus will typically tell

you, word-for-word, exactly what the professor wants to see in the paper. Instead of beginning the writing process by thinking of what you want the paper to look like, start at the syllabus and see what the professor wants the paper to look like. Have a checklist or a printed copy of the syllabus, and mark off elements as you add them to your paper.

Grammar and spelling. Finding mistakes on a paper can be like finding a needle-in-a-haystack when you've read the same paper multiple times. Once you've become accustomed to the document your eyes may be filling in the blanks and skipping over words you already know. Find a friend, a classmate or a tutoring service that offers you an extra set of eyes on your document. I also recommend a program like Grammarly that can find common spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

MENTAL HEALTH APP

Calm is a mental health app that helps users focus on mindfulness. Built on a "freemium" model, the app offers quite a bit for free and a ton more with their subscription. But what exactly does it offer? Well, there are guided meditations to help rest and relax your mind.

Helpful breathing exercises that are great during stressful times. They also have sleep stories narrated by celebrities if you like a good story before you sleep.

If you have children, Calm has meditation and sleep stories geared toward their interests with characters from Peppa Pig to Peter Pan.

There are other apps that can do some of these things individually. Calm does all of them and does them very well.



POSITIVE SELF-TALK

OUR INNER VOICE CAN BE A POWERFUL ALLY

Everyone has an inner voice that talks to them throughout the day. The voice is a combination of current emotions and feelings, past experiences, and our beliefs and biases that may be hidden to us. This voice is our **self-talk**.

Unfortunately, that voice is not always helpful and can be detrimental to our psyche.

Have you ever made a mistake and found your voice saying things like, "You're so stupid!"? That is **negative self-talk**. People engage in it because they believe it to be more honest than being positive, or that it puts them in their place, that

they deserve it, or that it helps deal with future disappointment. But, negative self-talk pushes you further away from the truth and can facilitate a further descent into any despair you're feeling.

Positive self-talk, on the other hand, is an inner voice that is optimistic, grateful, and happy. Positive self-talk is *not* a ruse, a lie, or a trick. If anything, positive self-talk is more truthful than negative self-talk could ever be. Below are a couple of ways to start strengthening your self-talk.

Counteract the message. The next time your self-talk makes a statement like "You're so stupid!" consciously stop what you are

doing and write it down. Then, spend time dissecting the statement with evidence. For instance, you are in behavioral health helping people everyday. Think of glowing reviews you've received at work or on a paper you've done. You might have made a mistake, you aren't the mistake.

Remove yourself from the situation. A technique I like to use in therapy is to have a person remove themselves from a situation. I don't mean physically leaving but rather imagining the same situation happening to someone else. How would you react? If a friend said they failed a test, how would you respond? You almost certainly wouldn't proclaim them to be stupid! Think of yourself like you would that friend, you deserve the same grace and slack.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

IMPORTANT TOOLS FOR SHOWING PEOPLE HOW TO TREAT US

Boundaries are rules we set in relationships on how we want our interactions to proceed. If we never set boundaries, we signal that treating us poorly is acceptable. We also may inadvertently allow people to take advantage of us by never stopping intrusive behaviors.

Unfortunately, there is a stigma surrounding boundaries. People often feel if they set boundaries they will come

across as rude, anti-social, or ungrateful to those around them. But allowing people to compromise our values and dictate how we can be treated is rude to our authentic selves.

While it isn't easy to set boundaries, there are ways you can ease the burden. First, remove the emotion from your statements when setting boundaries. Heightened emotions can cause the other person to be defensive or misconstrue

your intentions. Simply state the boundary with a neutral tone. Another technique is to keep the message short and sweet. Often, when we are worried we may hurt someone's feelings, we tend to make long-winded responses with caveats attached or excuses for our boundary. Adding extra words to a statement can create confusion that limits your boundary's effectiveness. And an excuse can leave a door cracked in that person's mind.



COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS: WHAT ARE THEY?

A WAY OUR BODY RESPONDS TO ADVERSE EVENTS

A cognitive distortion is an irrational or negative thought (or pattern of thoughts). Much like the filter on a photo app, a cognitive distortion can alter reality and change how you see yourself, others, or the world around you. An example of a cognitive distortion is thinking "I must have bombed that test!" only to find out later that you aced it. There are numerous types of cognitive distortions but we will focus on the two that pop up quite often.

Catastrophizing. One of the hardest cognitive distortions to pronounce but one of the most prominent you will encounter. Catastrophizing is the

irrational thought pattern that the worst-case scenario is most likely to come true. An example would be texting a family member and not receiving a response quickly. Someone who catastrophizes will begin to reason that the person hasn't answered because they have suffered some traumatic event like an illness or death. If you catastrophize, try writing down your worries and examining the plausibility of them coming true.



"Should" Statements. A "should" statement is an unfair comparison tool and a setup for failure. A "should" statement creates an unattainable standard or expectation that has no basis in reality. For instance, someone with flight anxiety may say something like "I should be able to fly without having anxiety." Knowing that you will get anxious on the flight and demanding that you shouldn't get anxious, ensures that you can never succeed and the cycle of anxiety will continue. Try being kinder to yourself by imagining how you would respond to a friend with a similar issue.

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ADDING EXTRA WORDS TO A STATEMENT CAN CREATE CONFUSION THAT LIMITS YOUR BOUNDARY'S EFFECTIVENESS.



SOCIAL ANXIETY (AND THE THINGS WE SAY TO OURSELVES)

SOCIAL ANXIETY AND NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

Social anxiety, or social phobia, is a disorder characterized by negative thoughts, feelings and emotions involving social situations. Typically, the cause of the distress is a fear you will be judged, embarrassed, or end up making a bad impression. While this may sound like shyness, social anxiety causes significant discomfort in the person experiencing it. Those symptoms may be a panic attack, feelings of being judged, paresthesia,

racing heart, shortness of breath, sweating, or shaking. The person's worry can become so overwhelming they may struggle to sleep, to eat, and try to avoid the issue at all costs.

Even worse, as with other anxiety issues, your self-talk can trap you in a cycle of self-doubt and negativity. A simple misstep can easily turn into the end of the world in an anxious brain. The key is

to use your anxiety as an opportunity to explore your automatic thoughts. Make a point to actively address each slight that crosses your mind. The rationale behind this method is that the more you practice actively changing your anxious thoughts the *more likely* they are to become your standard thoughts. Talk to a therapist if your social anxiety feels overwhelming. Remember, social anxiety is a treatable condition. “

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THE MORE LIKELY THEY
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DO YOU FEEL LIKE A FRAUD?

IT MAY BE IMPOSTOR SYNDROME



The feeling that we don't belong somewhere despite our education and experiences is a phenomenon known as impostor syndrome. While there is no specific diagnosis of impostor syndrome, the condition is a real and specific form of intellectual self-doubt. Here are three tips to take with you the next time you feel the self-doubt creeping up:

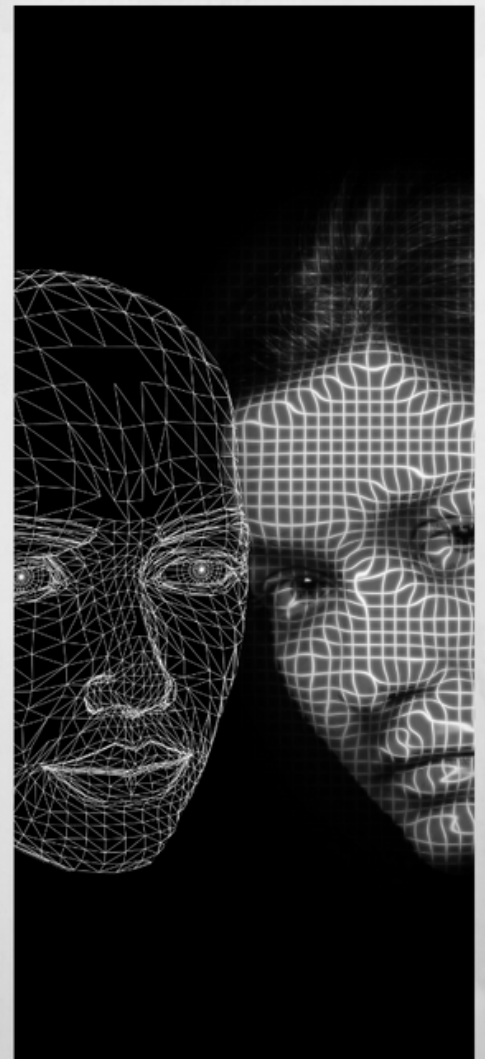
Talk to your supervisors. Most people have felt these feelings at some point in their life. A professional you trust might be able to assuage your irrational thoughts by normalizing and validating that experience and relating to it. Ask for feedback and keep an open mind!

Become a mentor. Another way to ease your impostor syndrome is by helping others just starting out in your organization or at your school. Talking to someone that is new to your field is a great way for you to see how much knowledge you have gained and how far you've come. Plus, helping out is a great way to feel better!

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**TRY CELEBRATING YOUR
SUCCESSES RATHER
THAN DWELLING ON
YOUR SETBACKS.**

Analyze your expectations. Impostor syndrome has roots in unreasonable expectations. If we create unreasonable expectations like perfectionism, we will be comparing ourselves with standards we cannot meet. Try celebrating your successes rather than dwelling on your setbacks. Write your expectations down and have someone you trust look at them to see if they are viable and fair. Look at the evidence you do belong and realize your worth!



ADHD AND THE WORKPLACE

A HURDLE TO PRODUCTIVITY AND CONCENTRATION

Balancing work and home life can be difficult for even the most savvy of time managers. Add ADHD to the mix, and work/life balance can quickly become a mountain to climb.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that usually presents with behavioral outbursts, impulsivity, and trouble concentrating in children. For adults, the symptoms can be irritability, concentration issues, and risk-taking behaviors. ADHD is also fairly common. In 2016, it was estimated that 6.1 million

children had been diagnosed with ADHD.

Even worse, ADHD symptoms can be diametrically opposed to the skills needed to excel at work. The good news is that ADHD is a treatable condition. Mental health therapy can help you work on the coping skills and the frustration ADHD brings. Medication can also lessen the severity of your symptoms.

Here are some tips that may be helpful in getting back in control. First, try to think back to times you were in school and what things worked best for you. Try to

tap in to those strategies that worked in the past, if you can.

If you need some new ideas, below are a few recommendations from CHADD.org:

- Use a planner or digital calendar and set reminders
- Plan backward to figure out the steps you'll need to take to finish work assignments
- Plan to work during the times when your medication is most effective.
- Try to do work that interests you as that will increase your motivation to do your work.



DANCE OF ANGER

Dr. Harriet Lerner is a clinical psychologist and an author that is best known for her works focusing on women and family relationships. One of the books she authored, *Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships*, explores anger as an appropriate emotion and attempts to engage the readers in ways they can constructively use it.

While the title implies it is only for women, men can also benefit from learning to respect anger and what the emotion is trying to show us. This book is especially helpful for people that typically silence their anger, deny it entirely, or those that vent it in a way that leaves them feeling helpless.



ALL ABOUT SHYNESS

SHYNESS AND SOCIAL ANXIETY ARE SEPARATE THINGS

Shyness is a personality trait where people feel a sense of awkwardness or apprehension when approaching or being approached by others. As mentioned last month, shyness and social anxiety are two different things. People who have social anxiety may be shy and may exhibit traits similar to shyness. But social anxiety comes with negative emotions and feelings. People that are shy do not necessarily view it as a negative and can live a happy, normal life. Also, some people with social anxiety are extroverted by nature and the only thing preventing them from being more outgoing is the disorder.

Embrace your shyness. Once you recognize shyness as a personality trait rather than a disorder you can begin to release your self-conscious thinking. Just know that being shy is a combination of factors that are biological and environmental. Research has shown that babies that have a sensitive temperament are more likely to go on to be shy.

It can be worked on. Part of what can make shyness difficult for people are the unrealistic expectations they set for themselves. People who are shy tend to think that they *should* be different and *should* be more like other people. The

truth is that everyone is distinct and a unique combination of their experiences and biology. We shouldn't be any particular way. Start by scheduling your social interactions. Being prepared is a great coping skill for shy people. Show up a few minutes early and get comfortable with your surroundings. You can also plan out some questions you can ask others and anecdotes you'd like to use.

Reframe your thoughts. Being self-critical can begin to push shyness into a negative. Challenge those "should" thoughts and learn to soften how you talk about yourself.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

A FEW TIPS TO MANAGE THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE

Time management in its basic definition is using time efficiently, effectively, and productively. Unfortunately, those terms are subjective in nature so a "one-size fits all" approach does not exist. Instead, we must focus on our strengths and weaknesses to identify an individualized strategy for time management.

That being said, theorists do have some overlapping agreements in what themes constitute the components of good time management. Those three components

are goal setting, prioritization, and organization.

Goal setting. A goal is a result you desire to reach. Completion of a goal requires motivation. A good goal setting technique is to find a goal that will sustain your motivation. Think about it like a math problem: *Goal + Motivation = Successful Goals.*

Prioritization. Prioritization is deciding *what* is most important and *when* it

should be done. Prioritization decreases the overwhelming feelings of urgency that permeate our lives. Create lists to rank your activities so you can visually decide what needs to be done today and what can wait.

Organization. Organization is the arrangement of resources for time savings in the future. Studies show that organization leads to productivity. Try to put things back where you got them, de-clutter your desktop, and plan, plan, plan.



IS THERE SHAME IN CRYING?

CRYING IS A NATURAL HUMAN RESPONSE NOT AN EMBARRASSMENT

Crying is a natural human response that people are often ashamed of expressing. When people cry at school or work, the embarrassment can be even worse. While there shouldn't be shame attached with crying, some people feel that it makes them look weak, vulnerable, or unable to control themselves.

Crying as a strength. Rarely, do people equate their tears with their emotional intelligence or their deep empathy for others. Emotional intelligence can help you make better decisions, understand your colleagues, and assist you in working more effectively. Crying doesn't have to be a weakness.

Societal expectations. Part of why we

feel shame in crying are our unrealistic expectations. Your culture, gender, and the environment you grew up in can all influence your feelings about crying. People mean well when they say, "Don't cry" (they don't want you to hurt). But they may also be stifling your ability to feel comfort in expressing emotions.

Mindfulness. While it is perfectly natural to cry there may be instances where you feel it is inappropriate to do so. A key to beginning to control crying *temporarily* lies in mindfulness techniques. Breathing exercises can focus your mind and body onto something else (your breath) instead of on your overwhelming emotions. Try breathing in for a count of four, holding it for a count of four, breathing out for a count of four, and holding the out-breath for a count of four. Repeat three times.

Identify the cause. You may temporarily prevent yourself from crying but you will need to identify the underlying reason you feel so strongly. Stress is a common reason people feel the need to cry. But frustration, conflict, burnout, and exhaustion are also possible causes of your distress. Work on finding the cause of your emotions and start to alleviate and limit those factors from your life.

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THE WHEEL OF EMOTIONS

A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE COMPLEX NATURE OF EMOTIONS

The Wheel of Emotions is a way to illustrate the complex nature of emotions and how they interact. Originally developed by Dr. Robert Plutchik, the Wheel of Emotions, today, has many different versions with a similar construct. The premise is that at the center of the wheel are the basic emotions humans express. Dr. Plutchik defined these emotions as joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, fear, anger, surprise, and anticipation but, as you can see in the example below, there can be a slight

variation on the name of the center emotions.

No matter how they are labeled, the center emotions are ones humans can pretty easily identify. If someone is mad or sad, we intuitively know it. But what if we go a step further from sad, can we easily recognize if someone is feeling lonely? Or, what if we go even further, can we tell if someone feels inferior? Unless we talk to a person, we probably do not know that they feel inferior based on looks.

But how can you use this tool? Well, the wheel of emotion is a fantastic tool for **communication**. If you are confronted with someone who is angry, you can use the wheel of emotions to begin to identify what is at the core of their displayed emotion. You can start by recognizing the anger (“You seem like you’re angry”) but discussing the emotions that are fueling it (“Are you feeling humiliated right now?”). We can also begin to empathize better. Understanding the deeper meaning of people’s emotions allows us the space to craft more emotionally intelligent responses.



ANGER ICEBERG

ANGER IS WHAT WE SEE ON THE SURFACE BUT THERE IS MUCH MORE BELOW

A common topic of conversation I find myself having in couples counseling revolves around constant fights over what the people describe as somewhat trivial things. On the surface, the two people believe they are the source of each other’s anger and that they, as a couple, cannot get over simple matters. But the truth is that below the surface of their fight is a complex network of events, experiences, and historical precedences that manifest as the current fight they are having. For instance, one of the people may have been reprimanded at work and now is feeling ashamed and

humiliated. The other person might have been cut off in traffic and now has a rage that has been boiling inside them. When they meet at home, the anger is present but the nuances that caused it are hidden.

We decided to talk about the Anger Iceberg because of its similarity to the principles of the Wheel of Emotions. With the Anger Iceberg, the surface of the iceberg contains all of the things we can see. That could be the physical manifestations of anger like a red face, clenched fists, and an aggressive posture.

The surface can also include other cues like a raised voice, microaggressions, and a sarcastic tone. But below the surface, much like an iceberg, there is a much larger, hidden area that holds clues to the true nature of the anger. Like the Wheel of Emotion, recognizing the path our anger takes can make us more empathetic, more understanding, and better at communication.

HOW WE CHOOSE TEAMMATES

THE FACTORS THAT PEOPLE COVET WHEN PICKING TEAMS

When I hear the phrase "choosing teammates," I am transported back to the anxiety of potentially being picked last on the playground in elementary school. But being picked for a team, job, or relationship is an important psychological event in a person's life. There are quite a few elements involved in being picked for a team, many we have no influence on. But recent research has shown that there are some aspects we can impact.

Your Voice.

One of the primary reasons you may or may not get picked for a team is your tone of voice. In the study, people making team decisions wanted a teammate that had a mixture of a **challenging voice** (the ability to think outside the box with know-how and outspokenness) and a **supportive voice** (a team player that is friendly, warm and trustworthy).

Niceness Wins,

As you can guess, it is difficult to toggle between the two voices. When forced to choose which voice to align with, people preferred the supportive voice. For them, being trustworthy, kind, and supportive was more important than the ability to command attention with competence and charisma. At the end of the day, when you are on a team, you'll need to interact with people and your ability to put people at ease and to validate concerns is most important.

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BUILDING RESILIENCY IN YOUR LIFE

FILL YOUR TOOLKIT

Resilience is the ability to weather the various storms life throws our way. Much like dealing with inclement weather, we need to be prepared in advance for inevitable life stressors.

Develop a support system. Your support system does not have to be huge but it should include people you trust and who will validate your experiences. Avoid people that trigger you or that don't offer you empathy and compassion as that can draw you deeper into a crisis. Having multiple people in your support group can also be beneficial. Sometimes an issue in our life can involve a person in this system (i.e., a spouse) and you'll need to have someone to discuss that with.

Practice self-care. Self-care is an important attribute to have when life's ills show up. Self-care involves taking care of your body with nutrition, hydration, and exercise. Self-care also encompasses your emotions like having hobbies you enjoy, journaling to release pent-up emotions, or relaxing in a way that is cathartic for you.

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**LEARN TO REFRAME
YOUR THOUGHTS AND
FEELINGS TO MORE
APPROPRIATE
RESPONSES.**

Reframe negative thoughts. Depression and anxiety thrive in those endless, negative ruminating thoughts: "I'm so stupid," "I'm the worst person ever." Learn to reframe your thoughts and feelings to more appropriate responses. "I'm so stupid" can become "I made a mistake but I can learn from it." "I'm the worst person ever" can be challenged with "I have a lot of evidence that shows I am a really good person."



EMBRACING GRATITUDE

A LIFE-HACK FOR INCREASING YOUR HAPPINESS

Gratitude is being thankful for the good around you. Scientific research confirms that practicing gratitude is the single most powerful method of increasing happiness. Best of all it's free, it's completely up to you, and you can start today!

The benefits of Gratitude include increased Emotional Health, Physical Health, Positive Personality Traits, Social

Success and Professional Success.

Gratitude changes you and your brain in some key ways:

- Gratitude creates Positive Feedback
- The more you practice gratitude, the more you will notice things for which to be grateful.
- Gratitude reduces Stress
- By practicing gratitude, you are shifting your thinking to positive

- (cont.) aspects of your life. This rewires your brain to create new pathways of positive thinking.

Stress is linked to all sorts of physical and emotional health problems so having less stress means being an overall healthier you.

- Gratitude fights Hedonic Adaptation
- Hedonic Adaptation means that we get used to the things that happen to us and we take them for granted. Gratitude brings our focus back to the positive to re-ignite those positive emotions.
- Gratitude helps us perceive Kindness
- When we perceive kindness, we have a natural tendency to want to reciprocate kindness. Others perceive our kindness and the positive feedback continues!
- Gratitude helps us to Praise rather than Criticize
- Criticism comes easy but Praise is a much more effective motivator.



THE POWER MINDSET

ESTABLISH RESILIENCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Heightened anxiety maintains elevated levels of cortisol which diminish resilience and can promote feelings of burnout. When appraising levels of emotional stress, feelings of loss, and disruption to schedule, the impact of daily change can affect one's mood.

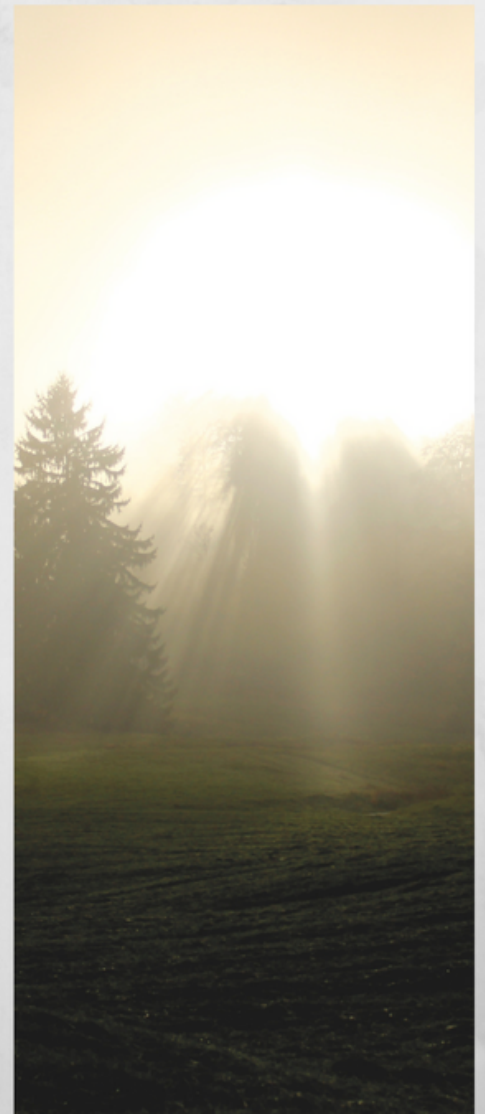
Working in changing conditions can lead to feelings of loss or discomfort. Feelings can compound and affect emotional state with depressed moods, anxiety about personal daily work, and inflate worries about future unknowns to personal economy and personal and public health.

Negative side effects can be loss of motivation in daily school work, procrastination, or overall low feelings in morale. Personal goals can be disrupted and unmet under continued conditions.

Try These Strategies

The key role of appraisal frames how we interpret situations, bring relevance and meaning for personal welfare, and respond to challenges through emotional self-management.

- **Make Connections.** Build and nurture a strong support system of people that want to see you succeed.
- **Control Emotions.** Avoid seeing crises as unsolvable problems: You have control over your emotions and how you respond to events; do your best to focus on the positive and find a way past the issue at hand.
- **Accept Change.** Adapting to the waves of change is an important leadership skill. Focus on what you can positively influence, and limit the stress about situations that are out of your control.
- **Keep Perspective.** Harsh self talk is not kind. Be realistic with yourself by gaining the help of a trusted friend, professor, or campus counselor to talk through situations and help adjust your mindset.
- **Self-Care.** Take time addressing situational needs and feelings as they arise.



POSITIVITY IN ACTION

HARNESSING THE POWER POSITIVITY

There are three different methods by which to harness the power of positive results:

- Positive Thinking
- Positive Speaking
- Positive Visualization

The brain is wired to respond differently to positive and negative thoughts.

Negative thoughts and negative emotions narrow the brain's focus and makes it difficult for a person to see all the possibilities in a given situation. Positive thoughts and positive

emotions broaden perspectives and allow a person to see different possibilities and build positive practical mindsets.

Responding to change and stress with positivity takes practice, reframing, and prioritization. Train your brain by intentionally practicing these behavioral coping strategies to enhance overall health and wellness:

Coping Strategies:

- **Problem-focused.** Ask for support from a friend; At work, ask for help from a supervisor; Create a to-do list;

Check in with friends; Walk away and leave situations that cause you stress.

• Emotion-focused.

Respond and react with intention by journaling; Share your thoughts with friends or a counselor; Listen to background music or nature sounds during the day; Be selective about engaging in social media.

- **Meaning-focused.** Accept that which you cannot change and transform thoughts to "best" reality; Reframe thoughts by looking for the positive; Cultivate inner resources; Reflect on bigger things: We are all in this together!



REFRAMING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

THE A,B,C'S OF REFRAMING OUR NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

When managing the discrepancy between a desired experience and what one is experiencing, focusing on the potential good in situations can be achieved through connecting with others.

Instead of venting about a worst-case scenario, adopt an approach to rephrase problems as opportunities. Reframe a mindset to believe that there are many positive outcomes that can result.

Turning stressful events into opportunities to give back to others can help fuel overall health and well-being through feelings of altruism and

expression of values. It's as easy as A-B-C.

A = Activating Event

This is a stressor or difficult event that challenges successful outcomes to stressful situations.

B = Beliefs

This includes thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions. Changes and stressors are temporary situations – and could be worse. Believe that change is not a catastrophe; trust in the leadership of those committed to the health and well-being of students; and focus energy on positive outcomes.

focus energy on positive outcomes.

C = Consequences

Trust that the outcome will work out for the good. Focus feelings, thoughts, and actions into creating a positive result. Meditation, prayer, journaling, and visualization are a few techniques known to increase feelings of purpose and value, greater focus, and goal attainment.



TALKING TO SOMEONE IN CRISIS

WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES

Talking to someone in crisis is always difficult. Remember, you don't have to be perfect, listening is one of the best things you can do. Below is a condensed version of what to do for someone in crisis from the American Psychological Association:

Recognize the signs. Abrupt changes in behavior are telltale signs of crisis. Lack of hygiene, decline in performance at school or work, sleep issues, weight fluctuation, persistent negative emotions (anger, irritability, sadness), withdrawal.

Direct, honest conversation. Listening to a person in crisis is important, but you have to broach the subject first. Ask them directly, "You don't seem like yourself, is something going on?" Be compassionate and polite. Use non-judgmental phrases that show support and empathy like "That must be so hard" or "I'm so sorry this happening."

Call for professional help. If the person in crisis is not safe – they present a danger to themselves or others – **call 911.**

Don't be afraid of any repercussions, you are trying to help them. If the person is stable and not in danger, guide them to a mental health professional. Mental health professionals are trained to assist people in understanding and treating underlying issues of crisis.

Resources for employees. Remember, there is a 24/7 EAP available to all New Leaf employees. You can contact the EAP for personal or workplace issues at (800) 633-3353, mygroup.com, or via their app on both the Google Play and Apple App Store.



THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY

Dr. Brené Brown is a social worker and a researcher at the University of Houston and a visiting professor in management at The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. As a researcher, Dr. Brown specializes in the study of courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy.

In 2010, Dr. Brown gained notoriety for her Ted Talk discussing vulnerability called "[The Power of Vulnerability](#)". We've included a link to the speech because it is a powerful reminder of the struggle we have to be vulnerable, learn from our vulnerability, and address the oft-present imposter syndrome.



SELF CARE

MORE THAN A BUZZWORD

Self-care is extremely important for our success in life. We often get bogged down in our various life responsibilities. A lot of us wear many hats as students, as employees, as partners, and as parents. With these endless accountabilities, we fail to focus any attention on our own wants and needs. Self-care is taking a mindful approach to recognizing and addressing our areas of need.

Self-care means taking care of our bodies. Taking proper care of our body ensures we have the energy to develop and maintain momentum for self-care.

If you are constantly on the run, eating properly can become quite a chore. Work on putting into your body the kind of food that assists in maintaining an active lifestyle. Exercise is also beneficial. Exercise can lessen stress levels while increasing energy. This doesn't mean you need to join a gym or run a marathon! Try doing some squats between television shows or taking the stairs if you can.

Self-care means developing emotionally. Sometimes a relationship or a environment is toxic and we need to recognize that. Setting boundaries is

difficult but may be necessary when we have tried everything else. We also need to take an inventory of ourselves. What are our triggers and our temperaments? If we know ourselves we can recognize situations that could cause distress and plan accordingly.

Self-care is enjoying our time. Find things that make you happy and make time for them. Develop a technique for stress release throughout the day. This could be a fidget toy or texting with a friend. Also, find a hobby that brings you joy and engage in it regularly.

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS THAT CAUSE YOU TO STRESS

Anxiety is a normal emotion experienced by everyone. But anxiety can be heightened during stressful events. When anxiety is at its worst, normal functioning can become impaired.

But why is that? Well, the short answer is that anxiety sends signals to your body that you are in **danger**. With an anxiety disorder, the fear and the body's response is usually out of proportion to

the threat you face. Remember, the body is adept at protecting itself. When presented with a life-threatening event, the body begins to **prioritize functions**: turn on important ones, turn off unnecessary ones.

Your fast heartbeat and breathing? Your body is priming your muscles with oxygen. Your inability to concentrate on a test? Your mind is hyper-focused on

potential threats. Recognize and normalize your experience. Try deep belly breathing when you feel anxious: in through the nose, down to the belly. Use mindfulness techniques like describing the room ("I see a clock," "The carpet is brown") to bring you back to the present.

Also, remember to prepare by sleeping well and eating appropriately. Caffeine can exacerbate anxiety symptoms as well. Use sparingly leading up to an anxious event.



BUILDING RESILIENCY IN YOUR LIFE

FILL YOUR TOOLKIT

Resilience is the ability to weather the various storms life throws our way. Much like dealing with inclement weather, we need to be prepared in advance for inevitable life stressors.

Develop a support system. Your support system does not have to be huge but it should include people you trust and who will validate your experiences. Avoid people that trigger you or that don't offer you empathy and compassion as that can draw you deeper into a crisis. Having multiple people in your support group can also be beneficial. Sometimes an issue in our life can involve a person in this system (i.e., a spouse) and you'll need to have someone to discuss that with.

Practice self-care. Self-care is an important attribute to have when life's ills show up. Self-care involves taking care of your body with nutrition, hydration, and exercise. Self-care also encompasses your emotions so do things that make you happy like hobbies you enjoy, journaling to release pent-up emotions, or relaxing in a way that is cathartic for you.

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LEARN TO REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS TO MORE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES.

Reframe negative thoughts. Depression and anxiety thrive in those endless, negative ruminating thoughts: "I'm so stupid," "I'm the worst person ever." Learn to reframe your thoughts and feelings to more appropriate responses. "I'm so stupid" can become "I made a mistake but I can learn from it." "I'm the worst person ever" can be challenged with "I have a lot of evidence that shows I am a really good person."

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TRY DEEP BELLY BREATHING WHEN YOU FEEL ANXIOUS: IN THROUGH THE NOSE, DOWN TO THE BELLY.



BOARD PREP

THE STRESS OF A DIFFICULT TEST CAN BE DEBILITATING

Preparing to take a board exam is an overwhelming task. Tests, in general, are never much fun and a test that holds the key to your future career can be an extra special version of stress. Preparing for your board exam means putting in the hard work while also being realistic and kind to yourself. I scoured the internet and here are my two favorite tips for passing your test:

Self-reflection. Start your journey with some self-reflection. Now is the time to look internally and learn about yourself. Some questions to ask are “What is your learning style?” and “What kind of study environment is most effective for you?” Many tips and tricks are geared toward one type of learning style. If that style does not resonate with you, skip it as you could end up frustrated and out of time.

Practice Tests. Most exam boards have resources to simulate the test you will end up taking. Studying for the exam is great but getting used to what the exam looks and feels like can ease any anxiety you have about that unknown. Also, practice tests can show the areas of study where you are lagging behind. Prioritize those areas the next time you study and keep practicing those tests!



A LACK OF CONTROL, A LACK OF CHOICES

ANXIETY MAY BE A HURDLE IN YOUR WAY

The choice of whether or not to be vaccinated has been a topic of discussion and anger. The requirement to be vaccinated to participate in healthcare has caused some to feel exasperated. Some people feel like their voices have not been heard and that a choice has been taken from them. While this may feel like a unique problem to the pandemic, the loss of choice and control is a common issue that can have a mental health origin.

Anxiety is an excessive fear and worry that can alter decision making abilities. While you may not have a history of an anxiety disorder, abnormal or catastrophic events like a global

pandemic can cause the symptoms to emerge. These new fears and worries have a significant impact on our ability to make decisions because they present a perceived threat. Decisions that involve uncertainty or potential loss are even more difficult when anxiety is a factor.

“THE LOSS OF CHOICE AND CONTROL IS A COMMON ISSUE THAT CAN HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH ORIGIN.”

If you are a person struggling with making decisions or having them taken, consider your motivations and the possibility anxiety is at the core of your apprehension. Try writing down your concerns and creating realistic pros and cons. Study the list and look for biases.

If you are dealing with someone struggling with these issues, try being understanding. With anxiety, confronting the issue is extremely hard. They will most likely need a helping hand (a soft one) in dealing with their issue. Make sure you are not too forceful as that could cause a person to retreat or become defensive.

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