Tips to Reduce Anxiety and Stress for College Students

When you are anxious about a task or an event, such as a research project or exam, you may try to avoid it. This only raises your stress level! Here are some ways to manage negative thoughts, stress, and anxiety in your academic and campus life.

1. Learn to recognize signs of your anxiety/stress.
   Signs of anxiety or stress may include: nervousness; lack of sleep; irritability; eating much more or less than usual; muscle tension; boredom; headaches; confusion; nausea.

2. Manage your negative thoughts!
   - Yell “Stop!” as soon as you are aware that your mind is racing with worry or fear.
   - Once you get hold of the negative thought(s), take a deep breath and think about calming, pleasant things.
   - Say a positive affirmation, “I will do well on this project.”
   - Visualize being successful at the task at hand. Focus on it.
   - Don’t put yourself down. Think about when you have been successful in the past.

3. Cope with the physical side of your anxiety.
   - Take slow, deep breaths.
   - Try relaxation methods such as soft music or visualization.
   - Alternately tense & relax your muscles from head to toe for 10 minutes, longer if necessary.
   - Do aerobic exercise 4-5 times per week (walk, bike, or run).
   - Do something fun to help you maintain a positive outlook.
   - Take short breaks from the project to refresh yourself.

4. Take your time and pace yourself.
   - Break a large project down into several small tasks.
   - If you have a large amount of material to study, break it into smaller sections.
   - Concentrate on completing one task or section at a time.

5. BE AWARE of yourself.
   Check in with yourself. Are you stressed? What signs do you recognize that tell you this? Take the time to recognize when you are anxious; work with it to work it out of your system.

If you feel like you cannot control your stress or anxiety, please contact the Counseling Center. As a student, you are entitled to 10 FREE sessions. Counseling is totally confidential!

ODU Counseling Center ~ 1526 Webb Center ~ 683-4401

(Across from Starbucks)