

Overcoming Challenges

Life is incredibly unpredictable. You can be trying your best, working your hardest and doing everything in your power to make something work, but sometimes it just does not. Learning how to overcome challenges on your own is a really big part of college. You cannot prevent every challenge from happening, but you do have control over how you handle it after. Below are some helpful techniques, resources and self-introspective guides to help you bounce back from the crazy that is thrown towards you!

Practicing and Maintaining Wellness

When life gets you down, it can be challenging to take care of yourself properly and maintain wellness during this time of stress. Putting effort into eating a balanced diet and exercise are essential aspects of overcoming a challenge. If you are not taking care of yourself and find the tasks to be overwhelming, knowing your support system and resources can help you get back to wellness. At the end of this worksheet there will be an interactive video section that takes you over a breathing technique aimed at reducing stress, a relaxation technique and a short yoga video that can help manage and deal with the stress that comes from life's challenges!

What is Wellness?

A state of mental, physical and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

What can you do to practice wellness:

- Eat regular meals! Your body needs fuel to go throughout the day.
- Spend some time outside. You can go for a walk, exercise or simply sit in the sun!
- Maintain physical hygiene! Everyone feels better after a shower.
- Read a book
- Talk to a friend, partner, sibling, parent or other family member.
- Spend some time doing something you love! This can be anything from taking care of your plants, cooking a new recipe, playing with a pet, video games, practicing a sport, crafting, or reading. As long as it brings you a little joy, it matters!

Three important pieces of wellness to focus on while in college include making time to do the things you love, creating a network of support, and connecting with established resources, each of which are expanded on in more detail below.

Making time to do the things you love:

College requires you to devote a lot of time to your studies, but we also highly encourage you to participate in activities that you love! Make time for student organizations, social time with friends, or time to exercise each day. The people in these spaces can also become a form of support as you build relationships and trust! Here are a few questions to consider that will help you maximize time to do the things you love:

- What makes you smile on a rainy day?
- What is one thing you do every day for yourself?
- What do you want to start doing for yourself today?

Creating a network of support:

No one should go through life completely alone. College and life can feel isolating, especially when you are overwhelmed. Knowing the people around you that support you and actually reaching out to them can be difficult when recovering from a challenge. Look for the people in your life that make you feel calm, heard, and accepted. This can be anyone in your life- a close family member, friend, neighbor, staff member, coworker or teacher can all be support systems that you can tap into when you are feeling alone in your challenges. Answer the following questions to discover your network of support:

- Who do you think of when you think of your support system and why?
- Who else in your life could you add to your current network of support and rely on in a time of need?

Connecting with established resources:

The University of Iowa has a dedicated team of health professionals to help when life gets hard. Various forms of mental health and counselling services are available through University Counseling Service.

Phone: (319) 335-7294

UCS hours are: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm | Monday - Friday

UCC location is closed over the noon hour and from 8:00 am - 1:00 pm on Thursdays



Breathing techniques and Relaxation

Stress management and relaxation techniques help build skills that aid in recovering and managing a challenging time in your life. Below is an activity using several online resources that walks you through some relaxation techniques that can be done at home!

Before the Videos: Fill out the following questions before watching and following the two videos containing a breathing technique and a relaxation technique.

- What do you know about utilizing breathing techniques to manage stress? This can be from personal experiences, information you have learned from others, or your own research and lifestyle choices.
- How might breathing and relaxation techniques help people self sooth during difficult times? What do you do in your daily life to manage stress?
- How do you feel when you are overwhelmed?
- What specific circumstances tend to make you feel overwhelmed? What, in particular, makes them overwhelming?

First Video: <https://youtu.be/CQjGqtH-2YI>

Second Video: <https://youtu.be/kdLTOurs2lA>

After the Videos: Now, after the videos, answer these reflective questions to see how you felt about the stress management techniques.

- How did you feel when following these techniques?
- Describe the most helpful sections of these videos. Why were these the most helpful sections for you?
- How could you utilize these reflective and stress management techniques in your daily life?

Yoga

Yoga has been a helpful relaxation and light exercise technique that many people use for stress management. Yoga can be done at various times of the day, for whatever length of time that you need! The below video is a shorter routine so it can fit easily into your everyday life!

Before the Video: Fill out the questions before watching the video.

- Describe what comes to mind when thinking of yoga?
- Why do some people practice yoga?
- How would mindful meditation, relaxation techniques or yoga possibly aide in your everyday stress management?

