SUNY OSWEGO
COUNSELING SERVICES CENTER

SUMMER SELF-CARE GUIDE

Taking care of your mental health this summer!

Counseling Services Center
A message from:
Counseling Services

We care about your mental health and if you have been struggling with feeling disconnected, feeling a lack of energy, struggling with sleep, & feeling more worry, frustration, sadness, & uncertainty, you are NOT alone.

We recognize the unexpected adjustment you all are experiencing and how difficult it is to have to stay home, to take on new responsibility, and to feel the ups and downs of uncertainty. If you are struggling, it is okay to not feel okay right now. This guide is designed to help you manage emotional stress, and the information should be used as a resource to help you find ways to help yourselves this summer, but not as a replacement to counseling.

If you are struggling and need additional support, reach out for help. Your struggles are valid, your struggles are real, and there are helpers out there offering support. We are really looking forward to a time when we can see you all in person again!

Stay safe and healthy!
- CSC Staff
Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Daily Considerations

Following the unprecedented global challenge and adjustment we all experienced this Spring semester, prioritizing your mental health this summer is important to heal, recover, and regroup. Many of you have taken on new challenges, have experienced further isolation, and have struggled to establish routine and structure, so here are some basic considerations for your day to day.

For SUNY Oswego resources, visit our Campus Health and Well-Being Resource page.

Structure
Humans need structure to feel grounded. Many have had their usual routine disrupted and have experienced a change in sleep, motivation, and direction. In these summer months, create a daily routine for yourself. Start with small tasks that you can do for yourself, such as time for one cleaning task, cooking a meal, doing exercise, reading, meditation, time with friends/family, etc. Find what is important for your routine and keep at it!

Sleep
We are all experiencing varying degrees of stress, worry, and frustration. Sometimes news headlines and environmental factors leave our minds racing. Sleep is incredibly important for our stress response, and if you find yourself staying up later or sleeping in longer, this may sabotage your ability to cope with these challenges. Try using relaxation practices before bed, avoid using your phone or computer in the hour before sleep, and avoid overuse of caffeine to allow your body to ease into sleep.

Exercise
Having different restrictions on our ability to leave our homes has led to less movement and physical activity. However, getting your body moving is critical to managing stress. Try to find small activities, such as going up and down stairs, practicing yoga, taking small walks, doing push-ups, using home exercise routines on YouTube, and going on hikes. Check out the Fitness Center website for some ideas.

Nutrition
Be mindful of your eating patterns during this adjustment. Many people have reported increased snacking or lower appetite under stress, which is perfectly reasonable under the circumstances. Notice what nutrients you are getting, be aware of how you feel when you eat certain foods, and do your best to avoid processed food. Drink lots of water!
Coping Techniques

We were not born with a manual filled with coping skills to help us handle difficult times. We were observers to how our parents, guardians, teachers, and peers dealt with stress, and we mimicked what we saw others do. We also learned by accident, finding activities that just made us feel better.

Trust yourself and be mindful of the small day-to-day activities you might already do that help. If it works already, keep it up! If you are looking for some additional ideas, here are some to try. Do what works for you!

Ground

1) 4-7-8 Breathing Technique
2) Body Scan Meditation
3) Meditation Apps:
   - Insight Timer
   - Headspace
   - Calm
4) Notice: 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 smells, and 1 taste.
5) Go outside (if you can) and let your feet touch the grass, dirt, or sand. Literally ground!

Distract

1) Color something
2) Listen to a playlist that changes your mood
3) Watch a TV show that makes you laugh
4) Read a book
5) Go for a walk (in nature if you can)
6) Play a game
7) Cook some food
8) Talk to someone

Create

1) Journal your thoughts, feelings, worries, gratitude, joys, etc.
2) Color in a coloring book
3) Make up a dance or learn a Tik Tok dance
4) Write a song, make a song, or sing a song
5) Be playful!
6) Paint
7) Play with clay or play dough (make your own!)
8) Scribble lines and shapes
9) Make a Zentangle

Soothe

1) Take a shower or bath
2) Massage your hands or feet
3) Use relaxing scents like candles, oils, or real flowers
4) Put a warm wash cloth on your face or put an ice cube on your skin
5) Practice yoga
6) Get cozy with a blanket or pet
Stay Connected

Social distancing has created new challenges to staying connected during this stressful time. There are so many unique options for seeing friends and family, and even meeting new people through different apps and services provided by different groups and organizations. Here are some ideas:

1) SUNY Oswego Counseling Services Center Discord Server
2) Use these Apps: Zoom, House Party, Quarantine Buddy, Netflix Party
3) SUNY Oswego Mindfulness Yoga Class
4) SUNY Oswego Career Services
5) SUNY Oswego Counseling Services Center
6) Write a letter, make a card, create a care package and send them to people you care about!
7) Create a virtual family reunion.
8) Find a spiritual service that has moved online, such as a church service, a guided meditation, a prayer group, etc. These are available for all faiths and practices!

Self-Compassion

With the increased stress of global issues weighing on us, we benefit from finding ways to help treat ourselves better and talk kinder to and about ourselves. Dr. Kristin Neff has done research about self-compassion. Check out her activities and resources.

If you find you are being hard on yourself, think about what you would say to a friend who was in your situation. You deserve your own kindness as well!

Create a picture and character description of your self-critic. If it were its own being, what would it look like & what is its personality like? Look for ways to have better boundaries with it, like you would if someone was being mean to you.

Build Motivation

Your motivation may have been lost during this time because you were emotionally overwhelmed and adjusting to everything! That’s okay and perfectly reasonable. If you are looking to tap back into your motivation to feel better, here are some tips:

1) Write your “WHY” statement. Why do you do what you do? What values guide you?
2) Make a short, attainable list of goals, both short-term and long-term. Map out the small steps to achieve your first goal.
3) Find a daily practice that doesn’t require too much effort, like going for a walk, cleaning a room, talking to a friend, etc. and stick to that practice. Hold yourself accountable to it.
4) Remind yourself that you can and have done difficult things in your life. You are brave, courageous, and capable!
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

If you are experiencing a crisis or need to speak with someone urgently:

**SUNY Oswego Counseling Services**: (315) 312-4416, then option 2
**New York Crisis Text Line**: Text "GOT5" to 741741
**National Suicide Prevention Hotline**: 1-800-273-8255
**Domestic Violence Hotline**: 1-800-942-6906
**The Trevor Project Lifeline** (LGBTQ support): 1-866-488-7386
**Trans Lifeline**: 1-877-565-8860
**The Steve Fund Text Line**: Text "STEVE" to 741741 to speak with a culturally-trained Crisis Text Line counselor

If you are in need of additional support this summer, here are some resources for you:

1) **SUNY Oswego Counseling Services Center**
   *If you were registered as a SUNY Oswego student in the Spring of 2020 and are registered for classes in the Fall of 2020, you may qualify for services over the summer. Please contact our office at (315) 312-4416.

2) **Thriving Campus** - Mental Health providers across the country

3) **Psychology Today** - Mental Health providers across the country

4) **7 Cups of Tea** - Self-care resources, live chat options, and Mental Health providers

SUNY Oswego Counseling Services Center
https://www.oswego.edu/counseling-services/