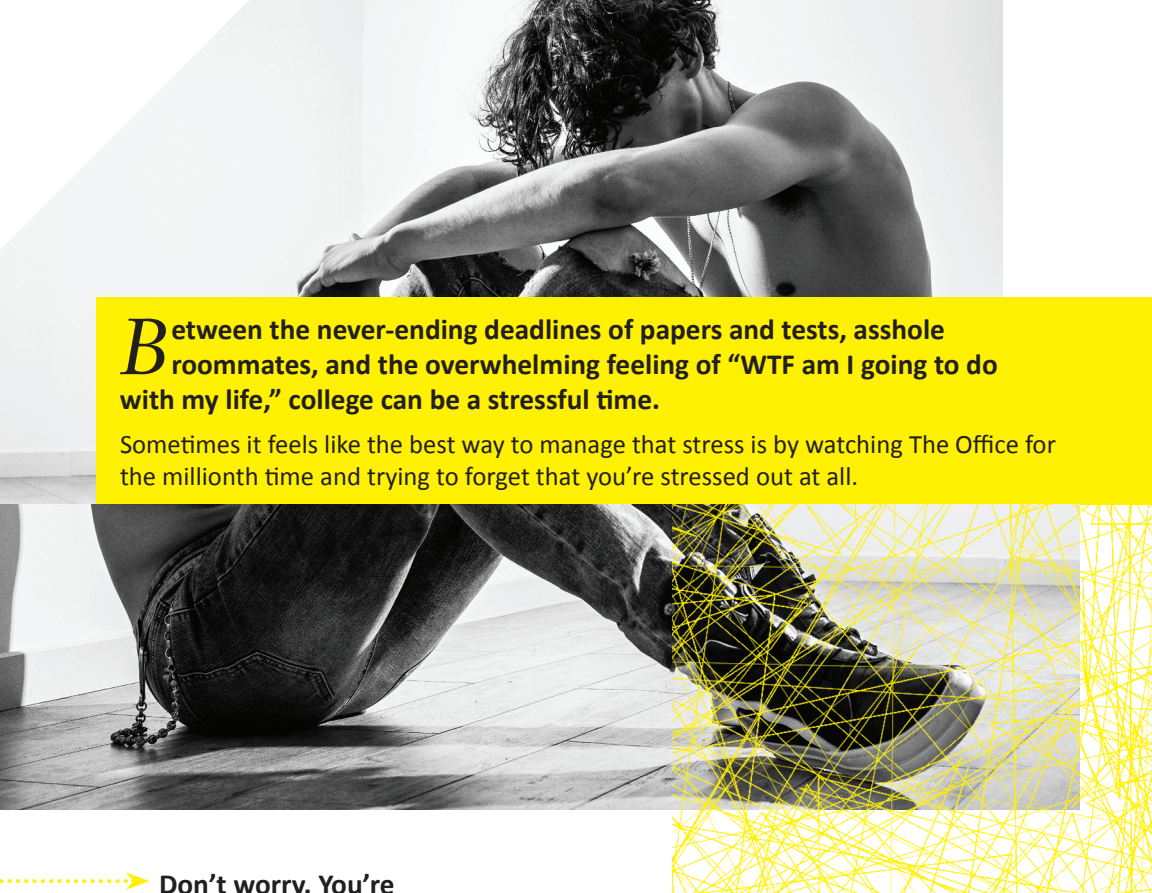


# *in Your HeAd*

College is already hard.  
Anxiety and depression  
makes it even harder. ....>

By LAuRa HaYEs





**B**etween the never-ending deadlines of papers and tests, asshole roommates, and the overwhelming feeling of “WTF am I going to do with my life,” college can be a stressful time.

Sometimes it feels like the best way to manage that stress is by watching *The Office* for the millionth time and trying to forget that you’re stressed out at all.

➔ **Don’t worry. You’re not alone.** But what are some ways that you can help manage your stress?

**Penn State Harrisburg’s Mary Prescott, Staff Counselor with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and Andrea Mull, Associate Director of Student Health Services, had a number of tips to avoid stress and stay healthy:**

#### **Go see an academic consultant.**

If you find yourself having too many things to do and not enough hours in the day, Prescott said they can help make time management schedules.

#### **Set a reminder on your phone to go exercise.**

Mayo Clinic professionals recommend exercising at least 150 minutes a week. Not only will it boost endorphins, it can take your mind off of whatever test/paper/terrible Tinder date is stressing you out. Consider walking to campus instead of driving. These days, there are

thousands of free workout videos on YouTube if you don’t want to leave your home.

#### **Eating right**

Trust me. I know that it’s easier to go through the drive-through than to cook dinner, but there are a couple of easy ways to eat better during the week. Prescott recommended eating at least one meal a day that’s mostly veggies.

Meal prep over the weekend. If you cook a meal in bulk, divide it into baggies or Tupperware and thaw when you want to eat it for lunch/dinner. Or consider investing in a crockpot where you can dump in all of the ingredients

in the morning and let it cook while you’re at class.

#### **Create a schedule**

Once you figure out your class load, create a schedule for your day — classes and studying, but also time to eat, exercise, see friends, and, yes, even watch *The Office*.

#### **Go to sleep**

“Sleep is what solidifies information in your brain,” Prescott said. “So when you don’t get enough sleep, that affects depression and anxiety big time.”

Going three nights with five or less hours of sleep, it becomes harder to function, she added.

While anxiety and stress are part of life and can motivate you to perform well in class, Prescott said that anxiety becomes an issue when it prevents you from doing what you want to do in life — like getting to class frequently, making friends or completing assignments — or causing distress.

Anxiety has been the most common issue that Prescott has seen at CAPS. A 2012 survey conducted by the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors concluded that the most common mental health issue among students that used their campus' counseling centers was anxiety (41.6%) followed by depression (36.4%) and relationship issues (35.8%).



### Counseling & Psychological Services

205 Student Enrichment Ctr. | **717-948-6025**

EMAIL: L-HBG-Ask-Counselor@lists.psu.edu

#### Hours:

Mon. & Fri.: 8 am-5 pm | Tue.-Thu: 8 am-8 pm

#### Crisis numbers:

- **9-1-1**
- Penn State Crisis Line: **877-229-6400**
- Crisis Text Line: **Text LIONS to 741741**
- PSH Police & Safety Services: **717-979-7976**
- Dauphin County Crisis Intervention:  
**717-232-7511**
- YWCA/Rape Crisis & Domestic Violence  
Services: **717-238-7273**
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**800-273-TALK**
- Veterans' Crisis Line: **800-273-TALK**

### How can I tell if I'm having an anxiety attack or a heart attack?

Because of the stigma of mental illness, sometimes students go to health services, thinking that some of the physical symptoms of mental health issues are physical maladies, Prescott said.

"They see it as a sign of weakness," Mull said.

Both Mull and Prescott think that talking about mental health issues is becoming more common. "It is becoming more like, 'Hey, I've got stuff to talk about,'" Prescott said.

What are the symptoms of anxiety? According to Mayo Clinic's website, some of the symptoms of anxiety are an increased heart rate, hyperventilation, sweating, sleeping issues, having trouble concentrating or controlling worries, and a sense of impending danger.

Mayo Clinic reported that some of the symptoms of depression include feeling empty or hopeless, angry outbursts or frustration, loss of interest in activities, sleep changes (either sleeping too much or not at all), anxiety, and thoughts of death or suicide.

"It's these changes in daily activities which make it hard to be successful, to get to class, to complete assignments, to connect with other people," Prescott said.

### It's OK to ask for help

"There's nothing too minor to come talk about," Prescott said. "If there's anything that's going on that's getting in the way — whether it's conflict with a roommate or you can't get to class, whatever it is — it's not too small. We've heard it."

If you're really nervous to go to CAPS for the first time, Prescott suggested asking a friend, roommate, or parent to come with you or even a professor to walk you there.

*Throughout the school year, CAPS and SDS will offer a number of workshops on healthy relationships, stress management, mindfulness, how to succeed in college, adjusting to college, and resilience.*

*Keep your eye on the calendar or even the back of bathroom stalls to see when CAPS and SDS will offer these workshops.*

*This year, Penn State is offering a new service for students called "CAPS Chat." Once a week on Mondays from noon to 1:30 p.m., CAPS staff will be in the library for student walk-ins for 30 minute sessions. The sessions are meant for non-emergency situations like issues with roommates or anxiety about an upcoming exam.*