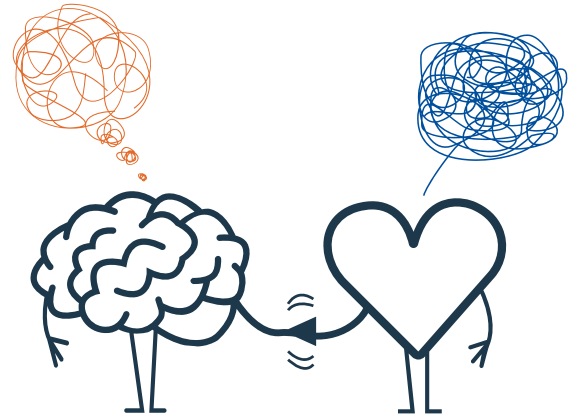# 3 STEPS TO GETTING BETTER AT STRESS

Everyone has mental health, just like everyone has physical health. Mental health is your emotional state that fluctuates with daily living.

If you neglect your mental health, feelings such as worry or sadness could turn into a mental illness (i.e., anxiety, depression). To prevent mental illness, learn to cope with your stress.

1

UNDERSTAND THAT STRESS IS A WHOLE BODY EXPERIENCE

Become aware of your symptoms of stress so that you can take action to reduce its impact

| PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIOR
Tension	Concentration	Moody	Sleep
Aches/Pains	Focus	Irritable	Food Intake
Headaches	Memory	Highly Sensitive	Body Movement
Dizzy	Problem Solving	Hypervigilant	Work
Blurry Vision		Shame	Substance Use
Nausea/Diarrhea		Self-doubt/blame	Zoning Out
Rapid Heart Rate		Overwhelmed	Social
Sexual Performance		Emotional Exhaustion	Grooming
Sweaty			Avoidance
Tired/Exhaustion			Disengagement
Illness			

What symptoms of stress do you usually experience?

2 CONNECT WITH THE MEANING OF STRESS
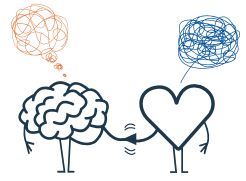
Turn towards your stress by recognizing that stress is what arises when something you care about is at stake.

FACTS ABOUT STRESS:

- Stress is a natural part of life. Everyone experiences stress. You aren't alone.
- If you're living a life of meaning and pursuing your goals, you will experience stress.
- Connecting to the meaning of your stress will help you create energy and motivation to take action.
- Stress that is avoided can turn into a mental illness, such as anxiety and/or depression.

Common stressors for college students:

- Occupational Wellness (school, work)
- Social Wellness (friends, family)
- Financial Wellness (money)
- Physical Wellness (health)

FACT: People who hold marginalized identities (e.g., race, gender, body size, ability) often experience different kinds of stress, at higher levels, over a sustained amount of time.

? What are you currenty stressed out about? What's at stake?

3 TAKE SKILLFUL ACTION

After recognizing the meaning of your stress, take action by asking yourself: *What would be helpful?*

BENEFITS OF COPING WITH STRESS

- Increased energy and pleasant moods
- Increased confidence and self-worth
- Increased energy and motivation
- Ability to make decision with ease and clarity
- Academic and professional success
- Personal growth
- Better relationship with yourself and others

Some helpful coping skills:

- Healthy habits (sleeping, eating, moving, nature)
- Naming your mood (use Mood Meter)
- Checking-in with your wellness
- Using the UNH Mental Health Continuum
- Social support
- Assertive communication and boundary setting
- Daily gratitude, awe, and spirituality
- Professional help at Health & Wellness

FACT: A facial or lifting weights won't solve your problems. But you can use the enhanced mood and mental clarity after these activities to create change and reduce stress.

? What coping skills have worked for you in the past? Have you used them lately? What coping skills are you curious about learning and trying?

NH Health & Wellness

Building Your Stress Mindset

Stress is what arises when something you care about is at stake.

If you are actively pursuing your goals and living a life of meaning, you will experience stress.
The goal is to get better at stress to reduce it's negative impacts on your well-being.

Pause
Physically stop what you're doing.

Take 3 Deep Breaths
Slow exhales can help to calm your nervous system.

Turn To Your Stress
Ask yourself, what's making me feel stressed in this moment?

Find Meaning
Ask yourself, why is this stressor important to me? What's at stake?

Take Skillful Action
Ask yourself, what would be helpful in this moment/today? Set yourself up for success by taking small and achievable actions.

Repeat Often
Continually remind yourself that stress is a natural part of life as you pursue your goals and live a life of meaning.

NH Health & Wellness