**Stress Management**

College requires significantly more effort from students than high school. Once you enter college, you will probably find that your fellow students are more motivated, your instructors are more demanding, the work is more difficult, and you are expected to be more independent. These higher academic standards and expectations are even more evident in graduate school. As a result, it is common for college students to experience greater levels of stress related to academics.

Many students find that they need to develop new skills in order to balance academic demands with a healthy lifestyle. Many students find that they can reduce their level of academic stress by improving skills such as time management, stress management, and relaxation.

***ARE YOU EXPERIENCING TOO MUCH STRESS?***

Here are a few common indicators:

● Difficulty concentrating

● Increased worrying

● Trouble completing assignments on time

● Not going to class

● Short temper or increased agitation

● Tension

● Headaches

● Tight muscles

● Changes in eating habits (e.g., “stress eating”)

● Changes in sleeping habits

***WAYS OF REDUCING AND MANAGING STRESS***

● A feeling of control and a healthy balance in your schedule is a necessary part of managing stress.

● Try setting a specific goal for yourself that will improve your mood and help you reduce stress.

● Avoid procrastination.

● Exercise regularly. Physical activity can help you burn off the energy generated by stress.

● Practice good sleep habits to ensure that you are well-rested.

● Limit the use of stimulants like caffeine, which can elevate the stress response in your body.

● During breaks from class, studying, or work, spend time walking outdoors, listen to music or just sit quietly, to clear and calm your mind.

● Start a journal. Many people find journaling to be helpful for managing stress, understanding emotions, and making decisions and changes in their lives.

● Realize that we all have limits. Learn to work within your limits and set realistic expectations for yourself and others.

● Plan leisure activities to break up your schedule.

● Recognize the role your own thoughts can play in causing you distress. Challenge beliefs you may hold about yourself and your situation that may not be accurate.

● Find humor in your life. Laughter can be a great tension-reducer.

● Seek the support of friends and family when you need to “vent” about situations that bring on stressful feelings, but make sure that you don’t focus exclusively on negatives.