

# OBU

## COUNSELING SERVICES



## Stress Anyone?

Hello Students, and “Welcome to Ouachita!”

Now... do you know what you’re in for? A lot of fun, and a good dose of stress.

*Picture this... A 55 year old woman is standing in a Service Merchandise retail store, trying to get a sales representative to help her find a particular baby stroller. Everyone she approaches is busy with another customer or task. After being unable to capture the complete attention of any store employee to assist her, her frustration escalates to the point that she grabs one of the display strollers and begins to swing it around over her head while screaming, “I want someone around here to help me find what I’m looking for!” Let me introduce you to one of my relatives. She didn’t always deal with stress very well.*

Well, at least for most of you, college life will present you with increased study demands from what you have been used to, which will mean more stress.

- A pile-up of numerous papers due soon, multiple tests coming within the next 24hrs.
- Family crisis, illness, unrealistically high expectations of you, or strained relations at home.
- Room-mate conflict, or feeling disconnected and alone

And, you might be able to add to the list.

**How does high stress manifest itself?** Maybe you could assemble your own list of symptoms... Stomach or digestive problems, poor sleep, increased irritability, neck or back pain, higher blood pressure, more aggressive driving, inability to stop and rest, skin rashes, a decrease in attentiveness or sensitivity to the needs of others, increased controlling behavior, concentration problems & distractibility, increased or decreased appetite, headaches, greater vulnerability to depressive moods and discouragement, decrease in spiritual growth disciplines, and so on. Some experiences WILL definitely leave us emotionally drained, and potentially weaker and more vulnerable to our enemy, whether the experience was positive or negative.

Know the feeling?



Certain serious tragedies and tumultuous life experiences can take a toll on us. In 1 Kings 19:4 we read that even Elijah once said to God, "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life."

**The point of all this is** to make it obvious that while stress is normal and not all bad, we must take care to design for ourselves regular ways to manage stress in healthy and responsible ways. This will remain true all your life.

**"So, how should I deal with stress?"** Here goes...

1. **Get adequate sleep.** It's a foolish notion to think "the world's 'high achievers' go with little sleep, and so will I" They also make a wreck of their lives, families, and employees over time! A Cornell University study revealed that optimum brain functioning and work performance occurred for most people if they had 10 hours of sleep per night. O.K., stop laughing. The fact is that habitually allowing yourself only 5 or 6 hours of sleep per night, or less, is a foolish thing. "In vain you rise early and stay up late... for he grants **sleep** to those he loves." Ps. 127:2 We're not encouraging laziness. Get the regular rest your body & mind need.
2. **Get outside, get exercise, get a little sun!** Go for walks or a drive into the countryside if you can. Toss a frisbee. Play on an intramural sports team. Ride a bike.
3. **Eat right.** Limit your intake of sugar, caffeine, foods high in saturated fat, or too much starch. **DON'T USE FOOD** to cope with stress, use it simply to satisfy your hunger. If you know you have an eating problem, don't try to hide it any longer. Reach out for help.
4. **Use your time responsibly.** Simply put... Study first, play later. If you twist this around, you'll only add to your stress over time. Because - those papers or approaching tests are left hanging over your head, waiting for you, and you'll enjoy your play-time less than if you had disciplined yourself to buckle down and get the work done first.
5. **Do what you know rejuvenates you.** Set the time aside regularly! This is a bit different for each person. Get away or alone with God. Sing a few songs with friends. Spend a little regular time alone with a good book, and with a close friend. You may need a cup of coffee or a

walk with someone who helps you laugh.

6. **Talk about the stressors you're facing with someone whom you can trust to encourage you** to think the right ways about your situation, God's presence and purposes, yourself, and what's really most important at this time in your life. Don't pretend everything is always just fine and wear that painted-on smile. Allow others to come along side you.
7. **Examine yourself**, and whether you might be causing at least some of your own stress. We do this most often through our needless worries or fears. Most of the time this can be called, "awfulizing". It's when we allow our minds to run to the worst possible outcome or possibility in a certain situation. When we do this we've allowed our fears have become a bit irrational. We'll talk about this issue another time.
8. **Take advantage of campus activities** that can help you connect with other students, laugh, and have fun.
9. **Make it a habit to simply talk to God about your concern or worry.** Do it all through the day, and make a habit of it. It's what He invites us to do, and it's for our own good mental and spiritual health. "Cast all your cares upon Him, for he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7



*Here's the good news... You really don't have to join some kind of Jinsu hoga-yoga training class to learn to cope with stress.*

Don't wait too long, like my aunt did, and you find yourself in a Service Merchandise store... Give me a call if you need some encouragement or help. - Dan

#### Need to talk?

- phone: 245-5591
- email: [jarboed@obu.edu](mailto:jarboed@obu.edu)
- walk-in: Evans Student Center - Student Services Office



About once a month you'll get an email letter like this one addressing a different issue that you, or other students around you, may soon be facing. You are at a critical juncture or crossroads in life, and **who you'll become** is taking shape rapidly. We want you to become all you were meant to be, and when we say, "We're here to help" it isn't just a polite gesture. It's for real. You matter to us.