

# Managing your mental health during exams

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Exams can be stressful and tend to put a lot of pressure on our mental health. I remember panicking at the thought of taking two of my midterms back-to-back, one day after the other.

Not only that, but I also had a flight to Canada, and I had to complete my exams before catching my flight. I recall completing my exams just before heading out to the airport. I was feeling so many emotions all at once. The emotions of leaving my family, and my country, and migrating to a whole new country along with the stress of taking my exams.

However, amid all this chaos, I not only managed to complete my exams successfully but also managed to do well.

## How to Manage Everything?

Here are some tips I use to cope with stress during exams:

### 1. Plan everything out:

**This is the most important step. Be smart and realistic. Here, are a few simple steps to help:**

- Identify which subjects need more time.
- Prioritize accordingly, so that you have ample time to focus on every subject, and nothing is left behind.
- Make realistic goals for each day and make sure you stick to them!
- Build in a buffer (extra time) in case you are not able to complete something on a scheduled day you can complete it the next day.

### 2. Say no to stress and take it slow:

You cannot study all your course materials at once. There are a lot of topics, and you may be confused about how to approach studying them all. Ask yourself, "Which one should I review

first?”

It is common to start studying one subject and then - boom! - you are thinking about another subject. At the end of the day, you realize that you did not fully absorb any materials. This approach can be stressful. Instead, stick to your plan, take it slow, and focus on one subject at a time. Remember, it is okay if things do not go as planned. It is extremely important that you stay kind to yourself and give yourself some relaxation time.

Quick de-stressing tips:

- go outside – take a walk or go out in nature;
- grab your favorite drink or snack;
- listen to your favorite song;
- take a few deep breaths;

Take a break, refresh your mind, and come back ready to get back to it!

### **3. Take care of yourself:**

To be academically successful, you need to be fit mentally, physically, spiritually, and nutritionally. For that, you need to take care of yourself. Do not be hard on yourself if you are unable to perform a task the way you thought, you would. Try to be empathetic towards yourself and respect yourself for your work. It will not only help you to deal with stress but will also empower you emotionally.

Self-care tips:

#### **1. Talk to someone:**

There will be times when you feel low, and you will not have the energy to do anything. It is okay. Spend time with your parents, your brother, your sister, or your best friend. If they are not with you, give them a call. Reminisce about beautiful memories from the past or just feel their love and care for you. We also have wonderful personal counseling services at the college, with staff ready to talk during stressful times.

#### **2. Say goodbye to Negativity:**

If something around you is troubling you or giving you any kind of negative vibes, try to distance yourself from it. Remember, you cannot control other people's actions and situations.

When first I came to Canada, I moved into the very first accommodation I found. I found it

very challenging, as it was a shared accommodation, and I had no privacy. Yet I compromised, since renting a private room was much more costly. However, I realized my living situation was impacting my overall well-being. I moved to private accommodation. Now I am grateful for making this move.

Small changes can have a profound impact on us. It is never too late to make a change.

### **3. Let's Celebrate!**

Reward yourself for achieving those small goals that you have set for yourself. Finished reading a chapter of your textbook, or an assignment, or cleaned your room? Do something you love as a reward - play a video game, watch a movie, take a nap, do some online shopping, or have that favorite dessert of yours. The goal is to appreciate and celebrate your achievements!

### **4. Be proud of yourself:**

Finally, always BE PROUD of yourself, for all the amount of hard work that you have done. Remember, it is ok to get down, the key is to focus on small, achievable goals and reward yourself when you get them done! Everyone has highs and lows, it is normal. Be aware of how you are feeling and find something to pick you up again. BE YOURSELF!

"Success is not Final. Failure is not Fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts." -Winston S. Churchill

### **Resources available at Seneca**

The stressful exam time can be hard on most of us. While the above-mentioned points can be helpful to deal with it, it's always a good idea to 'Ask for Help'. Seneca has great counseling services that are free and confidential. Book an appointment with the service [HERE](#).

### **My Take as a student**

"Exam time" can be one of the most stressful in a student's life. However, planning out everything, making realistic goals and executing it has always helped me get on track and perform my best. Also, don't forget to take breaks and reward yourself from time to time.



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