Stress

What is Stress?

- Stress is the physical and emotional strain we experience in relation to our ever-changing environments.
- Stress comes in many different forms.
- Even "happy" events or "good" changes can be stressful.
- Anytime change happens in our lives we are likely to be impacted by stress.
- Some symptoms of "overstress" may be fatigue, sleep disturbance, aches and pains, crying spells, feeling "down" or depressed, feeling "keyed-up' or anxious, and/or moodiness.

Is Stress Normal? Should I get it out of my life?

- Being "overstressed" is very common.
- SOME stress is an expected part of our daily lives.
- The goal is not necessarily to get rid of stress completely, but to learn how we are affected by life stress and how we can better manage it.

How can I handle my stress better?

- An important first step is to identify the stressors in your life.
- Pay attention to your emotional and physical responses to stress.
- Set realistic goals that are meaningful to you.
- Don't overwork yourself--allow yourself to take breaks and reward yourself after a period of hard work.
- Be sure to get enough sleep--too little rest can leave your more susceptible to the effects of stress.
- Exercising regularly can help to relieve tension, in addition to all of the other health benefits.
- Eating a well-balanced diet helps to give you adequate energy so that you can better tackle each day (especially the stressful ones!)
• Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol or drugs--even though you may experience temporary relief, they won't solve the real problem, and they will leave you feeling worse in the long-run.

• Don't keep things bottled up--it can really help to talk things over with a friend or with someone you trust.

• Remember to be nice to yourself--treat yourself as kindly and gently as you would a friend.

• If managing your stress is too overwhelming, remember that there is professional help available and that it is okay to seek it out.

Saint Mary's College Resources

Other Resources

Websites on the Internet:

How to Survive Unbearable Stress/The Medical Basis of Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Sleep Problems and Drug Use
http://www.teachhealth.com

University of Chicago: Virtual Pamphlet Collection
http://uhsbsd.uchicago.edu/scrs/vpc/virtulets.html