EOC Cares about YOU!
Thank you for taking the time to view our spring newsletter. Spring brings a sense of rejuvenation and renewal—have you thought about what you need to stay healthy and happy? We are choosing to put focus on this topic in this month’s newsletter, as self-care is truly important. We all had challenges in 2020, but we hope we can help make 2021 a better year for everyone. If education or financial literacy is part of your plan for self-care/self-improvement, call us to see how we can help you out!

-EOC Team

Smart Goals: Smaller Steps to Meet Your Goal—by Molly Taiber

The year 2020 forced us to change and eliminate personal goals, turning our world upside-down. Now that we have an idea of what to expect, I encourage you to set a goal in motivation to do something good for yourself or someone else. There are still opportunities to attach with and that deserve to have your time and attention. Some goals I can suggest involve enrolling in an educational program, reading a number of books, getting fit, renovating a room in the house or landing a suitable job. The best way to plan involves setting micro-goals or the little steps in the direction of the resolution. If you can check something off a list every day, you will be accountable to reach the result and feel successful.

Specific
Do: Be specific in naming your goal. Don’t: Be vague in the goal.

Measurable
Do: Include measurable steps that move you in the right direction. Don’t: Set large gaps in time for each step.

Achievable
Do: Set stretch-goals to challenge and grow. Don’t: Chase irrelevant goals.

Realistic
Do: Know your abilities. Don’t: Expect perfection

Timely
Do: Be flexible and prepared to adjust. Don’t: Lose sight of the big picture.

Exciting New Program!
Learn more about our Laptop Lending Program

The Educational Opportunity Center is proud to roll out our NEW Laptop Lending Program!

If you want to go to school, but do not have the resources to get a computer to be used for studying or attending school online, contact the EOC.

To be eligible for the program:

➢ You must apply for the EOC program or be a current student with us.

➢ You must be working toward your high school equivalent diploma, associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree.

➢ You must fill out an application for the Laptop Lending Program and also be approved.

To get more information and see if you could qualify for this great program, contact us!

(319) 273-4774 or educational-opportunity-center@uni.edu
February is Black History Month

BLACK FOUNDER CREATES MEDITATION APP FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR—by Sequoia Blodgett 7/28/19

Julio Rivera found a deep-seated need to connect to the wellness space. As an Afro-Latino, he found a practice that worked for him at the New York Insight Meditation Center. When that was taken away due to an intensive schedule, he felt extremely isolated which caused a sudden onset of anxiety that he wasn’t sure how to cope with.

After a thorough search, he discovered there wasn’t a platform out there that specifically met his needs. Rivera took his knowledge and background as a software engineer and created Liberate Meditation. It’s a meditation app for people of color built to provide empowerment and support.

The site states that it’s dedicated to empowering the black, indigenous, and people of color communities on their journey to find inner peace. Folks can sign up for free to access from instructors of color on their path through guided meditations and talks.

“We want to help empower people, not only to meditate but to show them that there’s something you can do about your suffering,” said Rivera in a statement. “We can help each other get free and be liberated.” The platform showcases content that is specific to the black community. Topics range from dealing with micro aggressions to cultivating loving-kindness for difficult people. There are specific chats from unique authors like Jan Willis who hosts dharma talks addressing the intersection of Buddhism and racism.

Users can select time frames for their practices that range from five to 20 minutes. They are then asked to rate their experience through the platform. “We continuously see how touched people are,” said Rivera. “A few people have mentioned in their ratings that they cried during their meditation and were able to release pent up emotions. To me, that makes all the challenges and sacrifices that come with building a business worth it. I want folks of color all over the world to know that they are not alone.”

Currently, Liberate Mediation is available for both Apple and Android.


Get Physical –by Charles Mhoon

Feeling overwhelmed? Stressed? Just down in the dumps? What are you doing about it? Reading, cooking, writing, etc. One of the best outlets for stress is exercise. Getting physical does wonders for our mental and physical health. With everything going on with the pandemic and politics, it’s great to have a healthy outlet like exercise. You don’t have to lift 400 lbs. or spend hours in a gym. You don’t even need a gym membership unless, like me, you enjoy the atmosphere. Just get up and get physical. Take a walk in your neighborhood, walk up and down your stairs if you have them, etc. Some benefits of this aside from getting fit, is that exercise gives you a physical outlet that helps ease your mind and helps you blow off some steam. Don’t just sit there and pout, get up and get physical!
The importance of managing stress
If you’re living with high levels of stress, you’re putting your entire well-being at risk. Stress wrecks havoc on your emotional equilibrium, as well as your physical health. It narrows your ability to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life. It may seem like there’s nothing you can do about stress. The bills won’t stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day, and your work and family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have a lot more control than you might think. Effective stress management helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That’s why it’s important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

The following stress management tips can help you do that.

Tip 1: Identify the sources of stress in your life. Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn’t as straightforward as it sounds. While it’s easy to identify major stressors such as changing jobs, moving, or going through a divorce, pinpointing the sources of chronic stress can be more complicated. It’s all too easy to overlook how your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors contribute to your everyday stress levels. Sure, you may know that you’re constantly worried about work deadlines, but maybe it’s your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that is causing the stress.

Tip 2: Practice the 4 A’s of Stress Management. While stress is an automatic response from your nervous system, some stressors arise at predictable times: your commute to work, a meeting with your boss, or family gatherings, for example. When handling such predictable stressors, you can either change the situation or change your reaction. When deciding which option to choose in any given scenario, it’s helpful to think of the four A’s: avoid, alter, adapt, or accept. Avoid unnecessary stress; it’s not healthy to avoid a stressful situation that needs to be addressed, but you may be surprised by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate. Alter the situation; if you can’t avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life. Adapt to the stressor; if you can’t change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude. Accept the things you can’t change; some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can’t prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it’s easier than railing against a situation you can’t change.

Tip 3: Get moving. When you’re stressed, the last thing you probably feel like doing is getting up and exercising. But physical activity is a huge stress reliever—and you don’t have to be an athlete or spend hours in a gym to experience the benefits. Exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good, and it can also serve as a valuable distraction from your daily worries. While you’ll get the most benefit from regularly exercising for 30 minutes or more, it’s okay to build up your fitness level gradually. Even very small activities can add up over the course of a day. The first step is to get yourself up and moving.

Tip 4: Connect to others. There is nothing more calming than spending quality time with another human being who makes you feel safe and understood. In fact, face-to-face interaction triggers a cascade of hormones that counteracts the body’s defensive “fight-or-flight” response. It’s nature’s natural stress reliever (as an added bonus, it also helps stave off depression and anxiety). So make it a point to connect regularly—and in person—with family and friends.

Tip 5: Make time for fun and relaxation. Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by carving out “me” time. Don’t get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you’ll be in a better place to handle life’s stressors.

Tip 6: Manage your time better. Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you’re stretched too thin and running behind, it’s hard to stay calm and focused. Plus, you’ll be tempted to avoid or cut back on all the healthy things you should be doing to keep stress in check, like socializing and getting enough sleep. The good news: there are things you can do to achieve a healthier work-life balance.

Tip 7: Maintain Balance with a healthy lifestyle. In addition to regular exercise, there are other healthy lifestyle choices that can increase your resistance to stress. Eat a healthy diet, reduce caffeine and sugar, avoid cigarettes/alcohol/drugs, and get enough sleep.

Tip 8: Learn to relieve stress in the moment. The fastest way to reduce stress is by taking a deep breath and using your senses—what you see, hear, taste, and touch—or through a soothing movement. By viewing a favorite photo, smelling a specific scent, listening to a favorite piece of music, tasting a piece of gum, or hugging a pet, for example, you can quickly relax and focus yourself.

Shared by Carah Mabry. Read the full article at https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm

Need tutoring for yourself or a child? UNI-CUE offers free online virtual tutoring! Go to https://eop.uni.edu/uni-cue/about-uni-cue/virtual-tutoring for more information.
Have you heard? We have a full schedule of webinars! Stop by our website at: [https://eop.uni.edu/educational-opportunity-center](https://eop.uni.edu/educational-opportunity-center) to get the links.

And the best part…they are all FREE!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/9/21</td>
<td><strong>College Success Webinar</strong></td>
<td>30 Minute session to highlight the steps of college, whether a community or university</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/16/21</td>
<td><strong>Last-Dollar Scholarship Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Discusses how to cover any tuition gaps with this state offered scholarship</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/17/21</td>
<td><strong>Don't Get Caught in Default</strong></td>
<td>Addresses definition of default, barriers/consequences, and how to get out</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/26/21</td>
<td><strong>Substance Abuse Workshop in Partnership with Pathways</strong></td>
<td>Learn more about substance abuse and avenues to get help</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/21</td>
<td><strong>Level-up Your Self-Care</strong></td>
<td>Discusses ways to protect our peace and why it’s important</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/02/21</td>
<td><strong>Last-Dollar Scholarship Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Discusses how to cover any tuition gaps with this state offered scholarship</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/04/21</td>
<td><strong>Don't Get Caught in Default</strong></td>
<td>Addresses definition of default, barriers/consequences, and how to get out</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/10/21</td>
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<td>3/30/21</td>
<td><strong>My Next Move</strong></td>
<td>Provides tools to attendees to assist with education and career planning</td>
<td>12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>4/07/21</td>
<td><strong>College Success Webinar</strong></td>
<td>30 Minute session to highlight the steps of college, whether a community or university</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
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<td><strong>My Next Move</strong></td>
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