

# Mind Your Mind in Graduate School

Graduate students face a tremendous amount of pressure to succeed, even from those who have the best intentions. Mental health is just as important and susceptible in grad school as it is at any other point in life. It's a cycle – poor mental health can negatively impact your school performance and relationships, which can then further affect your mental health. **You don't have to have a mental health condition to take care of your mental health.**

## Signs of Stress/Distress

- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased worrying
- Trouble completing assignments on time
- Neglecting responsibilities: personal, social, and academic
- Short temper or increased agitation; irritability
- Tension, headaches, or tight muscles (especially in neck and lower back)
- Changes in eating habits (e.g., "stress eating;" indigestion)
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Trembling, tightness in chest, or rapid breathing
- Feeling overwhelmingly anxious or for no specific reason

## Here are some ways to take care of yourself on a day-to-day basis:

- Try to get more sleep, even if the recommended 8 hours isn't possible
- Avoid self-medication with alcohol or drugs - these can often exacerbate your problems
- Practice mindfulness, such as breathing exercises and meditation
- Move! Physical activity has been proven to be a productive way to alleviate stress
- Learn to say "no." Overscheduling leaves less time for yourself, can make you feel overwhelmed, and can result in lower achievement
- Have open discussions with your advisor and peers about the challenges of grad school
- Acknowledge your emotions. It's normal to feel sad, angry, irritated, etc., but also try to understand why you're feeling that way and if there's anything you can do to change it
- Concentrate on what you are doing instead of comparing yourself to other grad students
- Make time for your life outside of school; avoid making your degree your entire life!

Most universities offer free counseling services, so don't hesitate to seek help if you find you are stressed or feeling down for more than two weeks. **Grad school can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be debilitating.** Take advantage of these suggestions and the resources on the back page.



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## HELPFUL RESOURCES

### Crisis

911: Imminent danger to self or others

White Bird Clinic: 541-687-4000

24-hour local crisis line: 1-800-422-7558

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1- 800-273-8255 (press 1 for Veterans Crisis Line)

Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386 (for LGBTQ youth)

Crisis Text Line: Text "CTL" or "LISTEN" to 741-741; [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

### Other Resources

**The Jed Foundation** • [jedfoundation.org](http://jedfoundation.org)

Promotes emotional health among college and university students. Includes sections for students, parents and campus staff, resources and links.

**Mind Your Mind Project** • [mindyourmindproject.org](http://mindyourmindproject.org)

Offers general information about mental wellness, print and online resources, research and data.

**Preventionlane** • [preventionlane.org](http://preventionlane.org)

Website of Lane County Public Health's Prevention Program. Topics include suicide prevention, mental health, alcohol & other drugs, and problem gambling. Local resources also included.

**Uline** • [ulifeline.org](http://ulifeline.org)

An online resource for college mental health, with confidential screening, hotline, and text resources.

