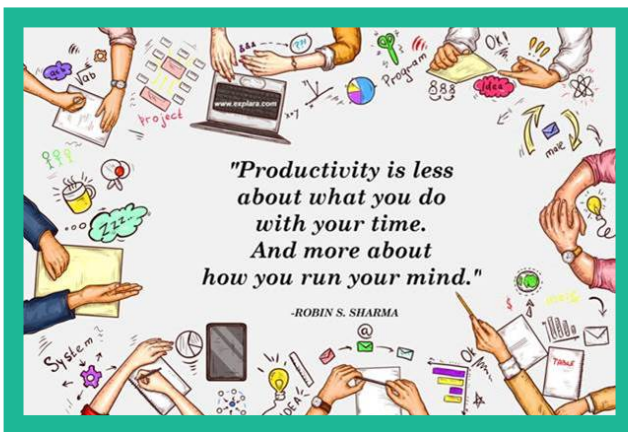


HOLISTIC COPING SKILLS DURING COVID-19



A psycho-social and academic toolbox to help you navigate this period.

ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

Change is happening all around us. It's global, stressful, yet inevitable and constant. We may resist and deny it at first because it makes us feel uncomfortable and we desire life to remain familiar. We may resist it out of fear that we don't have enough skills to manage it and that it may cost us more than we can gain. Although overwhelming, change can also provide opportunities for growth, learning & adaptation.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE PROCESS:

Individuals go through various stages while trying to adapt to change.



These stages are not always experienced in a linear manner!

EMBRACING CHANGE THROUGH FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Exploration

Ways to help you understand the change & make meaning:

- o Identify the problem and confront your concerns about the change
- o Focus on what you can do and explore the advantages of the change
 - Identify skills that have helped you adapt to unfamiliar situations
 - Use virtual platforms to emulate traditional strategies that worked (eg. study groups and friendship group video chats)
- o Shape your path by creating a change plan & ask yourself 'what do I need right now to cope'

Commitment:

Ways to help you commit to your plan and monitor your progress:

- o Create small wins
- o Use small goals to reach the larger goal
- o Motivate yourself to stick to your plan and reward yourself

APPLY THE **WOOP** MODEL!

Wish - What do you want or hope to achieve?

Outcome - What would happen if you achieved your outcome?

Obstacles - What might be in the way of achieving your outcome?

Plan - What plans/actions do you have in place to overcome obstacles?
OR...

APPLY THE **GROW** MODEL!

Goal - What outcome do you want?

Reality - What is happening now?

Options - What opportunities could you explore?

Will - What will you do?

SELF AWARENESS

Your mindset is everything! Your perspective is the most powerful thing you can control in any situation that is beyond your control.

The first step to understand this is through Self-Awareness.

What is Self-Awareness? Why does it matter?

- o It is the ability to examine and understand who you are relative to the world around you
- o It is developed through skills like self-reflection, meaning-making and the process of improving core values and beliefs

Benefits of being Self-Aware:

- o It makes you more proactive, boosts your acceptance, and encourages positive self-development
- o It allows you to see things from the perspective of others, practice self-control, work-study creatively and productively
- o It makes you better at your academics, better communicators within our academic environment and enhances your self-confidence
- o It leads to better decision-making

Barriers to Self-Awareness:

- o Your own bias - the fear of being judged results in consciously or unconsciously hiding your faults
- o Avoidance of feedback
- o Lack of introspection and self-reflection

5 Ways to cultivate your Self-Awareness:

1. Create space and time

- Connect with yourself daily
- Create moments of "me time"
- Avoid digital distractions

2. Practice Mindfulness

- Pay attention to your inner state as it arises
- Try mindful walking, eating, listening

3. Journal your awareness

- Process your thoughts through writing
- Record your inner states

4. Practise Listening

- Pay attention to others
- Observe emotions and body language
- Don't judge or evaluate

5. Gain a different perspective

- Ask for feedback

CREATING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES



Relationships at varsity, home and personal social settings are a big part of our lives. We need to explore ways in which we relate with others healthily for our own well-being and that of others

Understanding relationship boundaries:

- o An awareness of what you consider as acceptable versus unacceptable behavior in a relationship
- o Self-awareness about the extent which you can accommodate and allow others in your physical and emotional space
- o Boundaries can be **too rigid**: Distancing yourself from others and not asking for help and support
- o Boundaries can be **too flexible**: Accepting others' actions, behavior or decisions that continuously disadvantage you
- o Boundaries can be **balanced**: Identifying your personal needs and being able to communicate them to others

Barriers to creating relationship boundaries:

- o Intense feelings of guilt to disappoint others
- o Fear of being rejected by others
- o Avoiding communication

Why is it important to establish healthy relationship boundaries?

- o To ensure your emotional, physical and mental well-being in relationships with others
- o To create space to develop awareness of self, values and priorities
- o To be able to express your needs healthily

Benefits of having healthy relationship boundaries:

- o Able to have a good sense of awareness about your limitations
- o Lowers chances of burnout
- o Promotes self-compassion
- o Able to accommodate and care for others
- o Ability to maintain meaningful relations with others

TOWARDS ACTIVELY SETTING RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES:

Step 1:

Identify relationships where there are unhealthy boundaries: (e.g. friendships, professional relationships, siblings, parents)

Step 2:

Intentionally communicate and express your needs: "I need time from morning to afternoon to attend to academic activities"

Step 3:

Intentionally communicate and express why your needs are important: "So that I do not fall behind with my academic activities"

BALANCED LIFE



Achieving the balance between academics and home-life

Our classrooms have become our living room, bedroom or garden. We find ourselves in unfamiliar situations and therefore we need to find new ways of studying and interacting.

What to consider in order to feel balanced?

- o Be open to re-establishing your routine
- o Create structure
- o Be realistic about what can be achieved
- o Highlight accomplishments
- o Be mindful of the time required for academics and home activities
- o Take scheduled breaks to re-energise
- o Eat well, prioritise sleep and stay active
- o Reach out to colleagues/classmates and lecturers for support
- o Maintain virtual social contact with family and friends
- o Limit how often and through what means you access the news and information

Sources:

<http://www.lib.sfu.ca.slc/strategies/managing-time/procrastination-results-reasons-stopping>
<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE>



CONTACT US:

If you are overwhelmed, please call:

Wits Student Crisis Line 0800 111 331 (Toll free 24/7/365)

or

For one-on-one assistance from the OSS, please book **telephonic or online counselling** by emailing: studentsupport.health@wits.ac.za

Follow the Office of Student Success Instagram page:

@office_of_student_success



DEALING WITH PROCRASTINATION

When it comes to managing time and managing the self, we may struggle with procrastination. Here are the **3As** of assisting you in identifying how, why and when you procrastinate and how best to overcome it: **Awareness-Action-Application!**

AWARENESS:

Establish **'how, when, why and what'** of your procrastination by responding to the following sets of questions:

How do I procrastinate?

o Watching videos; social media; video games; other chores

When do I often procrastinate?

- o Before assignments are due; when I have to join in discussions
- o When I have to write a tutorial; before tests and exams
- o Other (specify): _____

Why do I procrastinate?

- o Feeling overwhelmed – do not know when and how to begin
- o Thinking that I have plenty of time and therefore completing the task seeming not urgent
- o Starting the night before – thinking the task will not need much time to complete
- o I do not think doing a good job matters after all
- o Other (specify): _____

ACTION:

Write a to-do-list of your tasks for each following day:

- o Prioritise and list the tasks in order of importance
- o Set reasonable time frames to complete tasks – be realistic
- o Do not get stuck on one task- move on and come back when refreshed

Diarrize and use a calendar but in the format you like paper or electronic

- o Keep track of due dates
- o Update calendar daily end of each day

Plan ahead:

- o Do not let tasks and time get away
- o Set minimum time for academic work – time yourself and track your progress
- o Set personal study and classroom times in the calendar just like any appointment
- o Break large tasks into small manageable tasks – set dates
- o Avoid cramming for tests/exams the night before. Study early and review a little a day
- o Find appropriate space to study to minimise disruptions

APPLICATION:

- o My goal to reduce procrastination is _____
- o I will achieve my goal by using the following strategies: _____

