



S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

IUP
Counseling
Center

Brought to you by the IUP Counseling Center at the Center for Health and Well-Being

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Jump into ACTion!!



As your semester winds down, your stress ramps up, and your summer can't start soon enough, learn about some principles behind Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) that you can apply now to improve your mental health!

Connect with your Whole Self

When we define ourselves by our problems, it is easy to get overwhelmed when things go wrong. To change our situation, we need to remember that we exist outside our current stress and that struggles will pass.



Try this:

- Remind yourself that you are the sky, not the weather. You may storm some days, be overcast the next, or have several weeks of sun, but you contain multitudes!
- When you notice yourself having negative thoughts like "I'm going to fail" or "I'm not good enough" add the phrase "I'm having the thought that . . ." before them to remind yourself they are happening to you and are not permanent.

Values

A long and difficult road is more bearable when we know where we are going. Knowing what is important to us helps us recognize the meaning in our efforts, and the reward that makes the struggles worth experiencing.



Try this:

- Take a moment to write down what is important to you and what efforts you put toward them in a given week. If you notice your activities don't align with your values, make some changes!
- Next time you struggle with a task, remember why you are doing it and what is important to you about getting it done. Use this awareness to help motivate you to finish!

Think Differently

Our brain often views our thoughts as truth, rather than as messages we tell ourselves. It is programmed to believe thoughts are objective reality even when they are based on unfair, unhealthy, negative biases. Recognize that we grant our thoughts the power they have over us and can take that power back.

Try this:

- Treat thoughts less seriously by saying them aloud in silly voices or to silly tunes
- Write down your thoughts on note cards and take time to flick them away to remind yourself that you can cast them aside as quickly as they can arise



Accept What You Can

Sometimes, the best way to get what we want is to accept what we have already. You may not like all the work that needs to get done before the end of the semester, but we need to accept we have it in order to finish it. Acceptance is not about approving of your situation but coming to terms with reality so you can make the best of it.

Try this:

- Stop avoiding or distracting yourself from your responsibilities, even when they feel overwhelming, or they will just become tomorrow's problem
- List everything you cannot change about your current stressors and have empathy for yourself over your current challenges



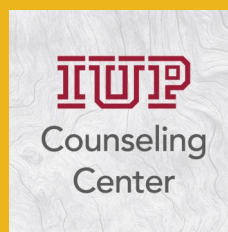
Commit to Acting

When we feel stuck in life or in a situation, often the only thing we know for sure is that what we have been trying doesn't work. We need to act differently, sometimes just in small ways, to start building momentum in the right direction.



Try this:

- Experiment with different coping strategies! If isolating yourself when your sad doesn't help, make yourself reach out to friends to see if it helps better. Keep acting until you find something that works.
- Write down 2-3 things that you want to do this summer (that align with your values) and what first steps you can take to work toward them once the semester ends. Show these goals to others and have them hold you accountable to following through.



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