

# On My Mind

Purchase College Counseling Center Newsletter  
www.purchase.edu/departments/counselingcenter

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NOVEMBER 2011

## The Balancing Act By: Elina (Ella) Spektor, Ph.D.

College is a time in life that is filled with opportunities regardless of whether you're a freshman or a senior. With the beginning of every academic year can come the excitement and anticipation for all these opportunities. There are classes to take, friendships to form or reunite with, parties to attend, clubs to join, a major and career to choose, and all those little

everyday tasks to do. Whew, even writing that leaves me feeling a little stressed and overwhelmed. So how do you do it all? Is it even possible without stressing yourself out too much? Should you even do it all?

The human body is a powerful tool in that it sends us signals when we're pushing it into overdrive and it needs a rest. So what are some of the

**signs of stress?** Here are some of the common symptoms experienced.<sup>1</sup>

**Physical:** Stomach ache, headache, dizziness, eye strain, sleep problems (too little or too much), and problems concentrating.

**Emotional:** Moodiness, feeling low or depressed, anxiety, irritability or anger, and  
**(Continued on page 2)**

### Editing and Design:

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### Counseling Center

Basement of Humanities Room # 0012  
(914) 251-6390

Hours:  
Mon-Fri  
9am-5 pm

*Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.*

*~Jackson Brown, Jr.*

### Help Wanted from Dr. Z...

Dear Dr. Z,

I came to the Counseling Center in September and was told that there was a limit of 14 sessions available to a student for the entire academic year. A friend of mine went to the Counseling Center recently and was not informed of any limits. What's up? Are there limits, and if not, why the change in policy? Also, is it true that Dr. Glenn Pollack, the Director, is no longer working at the Counseling Center?

Bewildered

Dear Bewildered,

I can appreciate the puzzlement, as there has been a change in policy regarding session limits. The policy of session limits was instituted to better accommodate the high demand of our services. After a trial period and further consideration, we felt that our students would be best served without a session limit and it was officially revoked October 5<sup>th</sup>. We apologize for the confusion.

We are also aware that Dr. Pollack's sudden departure from the Counseling Center may be disconcerting and upsetting, especially for the students who saw him for counseling. We will make every effort to accommodate those students who

would like to continue their therapy and assist them in transitioning to another therapist. We also encourage you to come to the Counseling Center to address your concerns in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Z

off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



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indecisiveness.

**Behaviors:** Exaggerating normal behaviors (e.g. becoming workaholics), blaming others or being overly critical of others, and having fewer stress-free interactions with others.

**Thoughts:** “This is horrible/unbearable,” “I’m not good enough” or “I’m going crazy.”

People cope with maintaining the stress of balancing life’s various obligations in different ways. Some use ineffective strategies such as avoidance and withdrawal from others or using substances like alcohol and other drugs.<sup>2</sup> While these strategies

may be quick fix solutions, they may be harmful in the long run. Read on for some more adaptive techniques of finding that balance and avoiding stress.<sup>2</sup>

### Ways to Find Balance

**Physical:** Move your body! Exercise either via structured sports, dancing around, or walking around campus. Research has shown that exercising regularly boosts your mood and energy level.<sup>3</sup>

Give your body something good and nutritious to eat – preferably something that doesn’t come from a bag or box from the drive-through. Eating foods with all the nutrients your body needs

will keep your heart beating, your brain active, and your muscles working.<sup>4</sup>

*Just as your car runs more smoothly and requires less energy to go faster and farther when the wheels are in perfect alignment, you perform better when your thoughts, feelings, emotions, goals, and values are in balance.*

~ Brian Tracy

Getting enough sleep is vital for the optimal functioning of the body and brain. Adequate sleep is essential for good health and peak performance. Students who get adequate sleep have **(Continued on page 3)**

## Myths and Facts About Counseling Center and Purchase College Counseling, By Catherine Van Bomel, LMSW

### 1. Very few students at Purchase College use the Counseling Center.

**Myth:** According to the Purchase College Counseling Center Annual Report, 2010-2011, 783 students utilized the Counseling Center last academic year. The total number of appointments through the year was 5,113. We serviced approximately 20% of our students with the national average being approximately 10.6% for colleges with a student population of 2,500-4,000.

### 2. Counseling does not have an impact on students’ academic achievement.

**Myth:** According to the 2010 National Survey of Counseling Center Directors 59% of students indicated that counseling had helped them remain in school, and 60% stated that counseling had helped improve their academic performance.

### 3. Students who go to College Counseling Centers stay in therapy for years, sometimes for their entire College duration.

**Myth:** According to The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Annual Survey, 2009, the average number of counseling sessions was 5.7.

### 4. One fourth of college students using College Counseling Centers are taking medication.

**Fact:** According to the National Survey of Counseling Center Directors Annual Report from 2009, 25% of students using Counseling Centers also use medication.

### 5. College students’ suicidal thoughts are just drama and should be ignored.

**Myth:** According to the American

College Health Association, suicide is the second most common cause of death among college students. If you, or a friend, have suicidal thoughts please seek out help immediately.

### From the Wellness Center CC South 3rd Floor...

For a complete November schedule of Yoga, Meditation, Rejuvenation Stations, AA Meetings and more go to:

[Wellness Center](#)

[November](#)

[Schedule](#)

Or contact the Wellness Center at 4483 or Regina Abdou at 251-6665

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been shown to perform better on memory tasks and show better academic performance than sleep-deprived students. Therefore, it may be a better idea to get more sleep than stay up to cram.<sup>5</sup>

**Emotional/Thoughts:** Take every 3<sup>rd</sup> “I should” out of your vocabulary and say “no” at least once a week. Setting limits is not selfish, but important for your self-care. Schedule self-care and fun activities into your calendar - it may seem like one more thing on your agenda, but you are more likely to get a much needed break to recharge your brain and body.<sup>6</sup>

### Relaxation Exercises:

Various relaxation techniques may help you to release the tension in your body and let go of negative thoughts. Examples include diaphragmatic breathing and guided imagery. Try out a relaxation exercise that will take you on a 5

minute vacation with the help of this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LAmYS6kb7k>. You can also search [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for a different exercise that you may like more. If you have a smartphone, you can get a free relaxation exercise app (e.g. iRelax Melodies, Self-Hypnosis for Meditation) that you can use any time you need to.

### Counseling Services:

If you find yourself struggling and having continued difficulties, stop by the counseling center and talk with one of our many counselors on staff. A few sessions may provide you with the tools you need to get back on track.

Wishing you a healthy and successful academic year!

<sup>1</sup> <http://pc.brooklyn.cuny.edu/STRFLYER.HTM>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

Maintaining-the-Balance-A-Self-Help-Guide-for-Students.aspx

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/tc/healthy-eating-how-do-i-start-eating-healthier?page=2>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aasmnet.org/articles.aspx?id=659>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/selfcare/>

For a list of pamphlets from various colleges and universities on stress, coping strategies and relaxation exercises to deal with stress check out

[Stress and Wellness Virtual Pamphlets](#)

## Ongoing Groups

### Asperger's Support Group

*Led by:* Lauren Greiner, Ph.D

*When:* Wednesdays from 1:00pm

*Where:* Student Services Bldg, 2nd Flr Conference Room.

*Contact:* lauren.greiner@purchase.edu

### Time In

*Led by:* Donna Siegmann, RN

*When:* Mondays from 3:15-3:45pm

*Where:* Wellness Center, 3rd Flr, Campus Center South.

This time together will provide a guided meditation for deep relaxation and will help develop a practice to calm one's mind, create more balance and a sense of well-being. *Contact:* donna.siegmann@purchase.edu

### Connections: It's Okay to Talk About It

This is a peer support and not a therapy group.

*When:* Wednesdays from 5:00-6:00pm.

*Where:* Wellness Center, 3rd Flr, Campus Center South.

It provides an opportunity for students managing a psychiatric disability to share with other students their experiences such as, stigma associated with mental illness, self advocacy, empowerment, self disclosure and effects of medications, while offering support, strength and hope to each other.

*Contact:* donna.siegmann@purchase.edu

**Happy Thanksgiving!**