
Stress As a Part Of Everyday Life

Natasha Cavanaugh – Associate General Counsel at Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation once shared: “A lot of people believe that passion leads to career choice. But for me, purpose leads to career choice”. I want to strengthen what I excel in, and I knew that education is what I needed to achieve my purposes. Deciding to study abroad with the intention to pursue my education in the States was one of my most difficult decisions. And yet it has changed my life from the beginning. These past four years at the University of Cincinnati (UC) has shaped my foundation of my character not only in academic but also in the global context. Being ambitious and focusing all my effort to achieve my goals, I have had been struggling with stress. Thus, I decided to take the stress reduction class in my last semester at UC and it has not only completely change the way I study, work, but also improve my life qualities.

During the last couple months, I learned that stress is defines as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. Stress is a feeling created when we react to particular event such as bad work place, traffic jammed, break ups, too many assignments, etc. Stress rise our mental and body to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with extra focus, strength, alertness, commitment and high risk. Firdaus Dhabhar, PhD, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, define stress as a “constellation of events that begins with a stimulus or challenge”.

I do believe that there can be good stress and bad stress. Some of the stress that is associated with attending college are living in a new place, having to meet new people, having new responsibilities, and of course the homework that goes along with taking classes. If a person does not learn to cope with these stressors in a healthy way, that person may become very overwhelmed and possibly depressed. To keep one’s body and mind safe from the overexposure of stress, we can practice the following techniques that I gained through my learning process. Before this course, whenever I am stress I just tried to tell myself that I just had to work with it, I could understand how my emotions affected my ability to cope with stress. I literally let the stress control my life and I ended up using food as a comfort on daily basis and being introvert individual in life. I cannot express how many opportunities have I missed because of feeling low self-esteem and not confident in my knowledge to speak up and act.

So, I realized that the first technique I can utilize to help prevent or cope with stress is emotion-focused coping. I have to change the way I view that situation so that I don't let my emotion to blind my ability to the decision-making process. A great example is when I accepted that it is okay for me to take criticism on project from my professors, understand the feedback and not hold the bad grade to hear or put myself down. I learned to reappraise the stressor and reduce the negative stress in my life.

Secondly, time management and be organized are another technique that I have been incorporated in my daily life. I enjoyed the assignment in where I had the opportunity to look at how to organize my tasks to make better use of my time so that I can get done the work efficiently and effective. Being an active student on campus and participating in multiple organizations and even have a part time job while studying full-time, it is important for me to manage my time productivity. I learned through steps including omitting the unnecessary tasks,

easy tasks towards the end and prioritize the most important ones. It took multiple times to get use to the new technique. Now, every day in the morning I write down what I need to accomplish and make a schedule. This enables me to get my school work load done on time and to have time afterwards to enjoy my other activates such as going to the gym and just hanging out with friends and family.

I have hired a personal trainer at the Recreation Center to help me with creating a balance gym work out to reduce stress and increase my health. I found it interesting how three sessions per week really improve my immunization system and after each session I felt relieve like a burden has been lifted from my shoulders. During many materials in class, I try to lower stress with meditation. It is a practice that clears my mind and calms my body. There are many helpful videos on YouTube for first beginners, many of which focus on breathing and movements of the body. I have had to learn to ignore what is going on around and focus on myself only. Each meditation only lasted about 15 minutes but I used the time to reflect on myself and work on dealing with any emotions. This definitely helps me calm down when I have had a stressful or super busy day.

In conclusion, stress and stressors are a part of everyday life, especially if a person is going to college. Stress can be managed in a series of easy ways that are healthy and can benefit the person's lifestyle. In addition to the stated techniques my goals are to continue to cope with stress effectively and explore more techniques that could benefit my life. But the hard part is over where I had to take the initiative to learn these techniques, now I am able to lower my stress that I have from homework and focusing on really enjoying my life and new experience in the future.