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# Wellness for Graduate Students: Resource Guide

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## Campus Resources:

- [CounselingCenter@CSU](mailto:CounselingCenter@CSU)
- [FoodPantry@CSU](mailto:FoodPantry@CSU)
- [AcademicCenterforTutoring@CSU](mailto:AcademicCenterforTutoring@CSU)
- [StudentHealthCenter@CSU](mailto:StudentHealthCenter@CSU)



## Wellness Dimensions

- Wellness is not a destination to achieve, but a process of learning, reflection, and small habits; developing an understanding of our individual experience of these dimensions of wellness enables intentional, practical behaviors toward well-being.
- Picturing the goal of health and wellness as a hill to climb, challenges to our health and well-being in the world present a steeper and more difficult climb, while minimizing these challenges lowers the difficulty of the climb.

**[See this SFU pamphlet on the wellness dimensions.](#)**

## Hierarchy of Needs

- Abraham Maslow theorized that all humans have a common set of needs, from basic needs (like food, water, safety) to social and psychological needs and personal growth. When a need remains unmet, one's behaviors shift toward attempts to fulfill that need.
- Interpersonal and social needs are especially vital to well-being and success in graduate school.
- Conversation, art, music, humor, and other forms of expression and recreation are actively beneficial to human health and well-being as they serve important roles in meeting growth needs. While it is easy to neglect these in times of stress, taking time out for these "human" tasks can help you be consistent over the long term.

**[SimplyPsychology.org Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)**

**["What makes something better is rarely a response.  
What makes something better is a connection."](#)**

## Emotional Regulation

- One prevailing model presents emotions as powerful adaptive tools that provide feedback on our relationship to external stimuli.
- Managing emotions in a healthy way offers insight, while ignoring emotions can cause obfuscation (lack of clarity) between what we experience and how we perceive those experiences, limiting our ability to take informed action.
- Emotions appear to be more complex and multifaceted than previously thought, [as researchers at Berkeley explored](#). Emotions often overlay and intermix, which can further make it difficult to interpret them.
- The R.U.L.E.R. method (developed by the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)) is an easy framework for engaging with and understanding emotional reactions.

**[Building Emotional Intelligence Isn't as Hard as You Think  
\(RULER\) - Psychology Today](#)**

## Metacognition

- Metacognition is a way of being aware of one's thoughts and learning in order to develop and apply strategies. It can be used in the classroom, in one's own approach to learning, as well as in occupational and interpersonal situations.
- Metacognitive strategies are widespread and adaptable, but usually focus on approaches like recognizing current knowledge, considering the purpose or meaning of a given task, reflecting on previous challenges or successes, asking questions like "what do I not understand about what I just read?"



### **Metacognitive Study Strategies - Learning Center - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

## Mindfulness

- Mindfulness builds the ability to stop, notice what is happening (including any preconceived judgments or expectations), and then proceed in an intentional and measured way.
- There is no "right way" to practice being mindful. Difficulty in practicing mindfulness is normal and beneficial in the same way that struggling to lift weights helps build strength.
- ["What is Mindfulness?"](#) – 3 minute general introduction to mindfulness
- ["Why Mindfulness is a Superpower"](#) – How mindfulness creates a "buffer" to help manage emotional responses
- [University of Minnesota - What Is Mindfulness?](#) – General beginner's guide to mindfulness practice
- The S.T.O.P. method is an incredibly simple, "portable" mindfulness practice that can be used in day-to-day life, especially stressful situations, to step back and proceed from a more intentional place.

### **Mindful.Org - S.T.O.P. Practice to Create Space Around Automatic Reactions**

## Stress

- Stress is our reaction to stimuli, and can be negative (distress) or positive (eustress). Managing our stress is important to ensure it is at a level we are able to adapt to and grow from. Stress beyond this point must be minimized where possible and managed where not possible to minimize.

### **National Institute of Mental Health - 5 Things You Should Know About Stress**

### **American Psychological Association – Stress Relief is Within Reach**

### **Nurtured by Nature - American Psychological Association**

### **Journaling to Reduce Stress**

## Burnout

- Burnout is a complex phenomenon that can affect graduate students in particular but can also be managed and minimized through awareness and simple steps.

**[Mindful.Org - How to Recover from Burnout](#)**

## Imposter Bias

- The Imposter Bias is a common experience of feeling like you “don’t fit” or “are a fraud” and may be “found out” at any moment. It is common across occupations and is especially impactful for women and women of color. Learning and talking about this tendency can help minimize it.

**[You’re Not a Fraud. Here’s How to Recognize and Overcome Imposter Syndrome](#)**

**[BBC.com - Why imposter syndrome hits women and women of colour harder](#)**

## Self-Talk

- Self-talk is powerful and can influence our perception and behavior. Positive self-talk focuses on creating “scripts” that encourage framing situations in ways that support the best outcomes available. Think of how you would support a good friend.

**[Self-Talk - Psychology Today](#)**

**[Self-Scripting - Learning Center - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)**

- Self-compassion means treating yourself kindly and with the “big picture” in mind, recognizing that the challenges in front of you are difficult – important when looking at the marathon of graduate study.

**[Want to Change Your Life? Try Self-Compassion - Greater Good](#)**



## Other Collected Resources for Further Reading

### Graduate Student-Specific

[American Psychological Association - Secrets for grad school success](#)

[ETS Research Memorandum Series: The First Year of Graduate Study: Documenting Challenges and Informing Ways to Reduce Attrition](#)

### General:

[Character Lab - Actionable advice for parents and teachers based on science](#)

[Consumer Information - Federal Trade Commission \(tips and guides on avoiding scam/fraud\)](#)

### Mindfulness:

[Mindful.Org](#)

[Greater Good Center at Berkeley – Mindfulness](#)

### Metacognition

[Vanderbilt Center for Teaching – Metacognition](#)

[Cambridge Assessment International Education – Getting Started with Metacognition](#)

### Nutrition and Eating Well:

[Eat Fresh.org - Ask a Dietitian, Find a Recipe, Discover Foods](#)

[Nutrition.Gov - Credible Information on Healthful Eating](#)

### Exercise and Movement:

[Exrx.net - Reliable, Accessible information on exercise and health-supporting behaviors](#)

### The Built Environment and Social Determinants of Health

[Health.gov – Social Determinants of Health](#)

[Built Environment and Health - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

[Foundations for a Healthier Built Environment - Provincial Health Services Authority](#)

### Social Media:

[Dr. Tim Wu, Attention Merchants and the “Built Environment of Attention”](#)

[Angry by design: toxic communication and technical architectures](#)

[How to Have a Healthy Relationship with Social Media - National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)