

E.A.S.E. YOUR STRESS

SELF-CARE FOURSQUARE

E

Expectation

Stress is a part of life. We stress about things we **care about** and **value**. Stress calls us to action. When we learn to expect stress, we can **plan our time** and make better decisions. Expecting stress allows us to have control over it, instead of stress controlling us (Rock, 2011).

Put It into Practice.

Spend time reflecting on your values and goals. This will show you what stress motivates you towards a goal versus stress attached to unrealistic expectations or perfectionism.

A

Awareness

We all have a reaction to stress – avoiding, overindulging, etc. Awareness allows us to **recognize** when we need to take a step back so we can move forward (Cartwright, 2003).

At the end of a day, write down a time you experienced stress that day and what action you used to respond. Did that action move you closer to your goal?

S

Slowing Down

Once stressed, powering through sounds tempting. Powering through is not sustainable, however. Slowing down, even for just a minute, **makes room** to evaluate the situation so you can work smarter, not harder (Siegel, 2007).

Try Box Breathing: Inhale for four counts, hold for four counts, exhale for four counts, and let your lungs stay empty for four counts. This is just one of many different mindfulness exercises you may find helpful.

E

Evaluation

Once you can think more **clearly**, you can better evaluate the situation. Get curious and creative about ways forward. **Solutions** exist; they just need to be found (Siegel, 2007).

Try writing or talking the situation out with a friend or an academic coach. Often, we get stuck in our heads and are better able to process on paper or aloud.

A significant part of lowering stress is learning to manage your time better. If you feel like you can be successful, you will be less likely to be overwhelmed. Look at the stay organized section to see what you could do.

These are a few of many strategies available to you. For more ideas, refer to *25 practical ways to take care of yourself* or talk to an academic coach!

It is completely normal to experience times where your stress can start to interfere with your life. C.A.P.S. is a resource that can help you understand your stress and personalize strategies to manage it.