



ISSUE 02

STRESS MANAGEMENT LEADER NOTES

LeaderNotes are available to student leaders as a resource of the Leadership Center. All information contained within this document is credited to the author and does not reflect the official opinion of the Leadership Center or Bellarmine University. For more information about upcoming events, stop by the Leadership Center located in the SAC or contact Jessica Bowman at jbowman@bellarmine.edu.

Many students who are leaders in campus activities are also leaders in the classroom, striving to maintain high grades. Thus, student leaders feel the dual pressure of academic expectations and extracurricular responsibilities. It is not uncommon for a student leader to feel like there is too much to do and not enough time to do it. In addition, student leaders know if they fail, it is unlikely that they will be the only ones who experience the ramifications of their failure. The success of a campus event, the publication of a student newspaper or yearbook, the opportunity to advocate for the student body, may depend on an individual student. It is not surprising that student leaders feel extraordinary amounts of stress, especially when extracurricular coincide with examination periods.

What are some things students can do to relieve stress? The following list is just a beginning:

1. Maintain a calendar/student planner. Record date, time, and place of each meeting, etc. Include deadlines for extracurricular responsibilities and major academic assignments and tests.
2. Keep daily and weekly "to do" lists. Develop a system to indicate priorities (e.g., one, two or three stars). Complete the highest priority tasks first. Cross off each item as you accomplish it. Re-evaluate priorities as needed.
3. Schedule time for relaxation, regardless of how you choose to relax. You may prefer to listen to music, watch television, play pool or video games, read, talk to friends, work out, or take a bath. Make time for those activities that help you relax.
4. Eat a balanced diet to stay healthy. Avoid excessive sugar, caffeine, and fat. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Take a daily vitamin supplement that includes calcium and iron if your diet does not provide adequate nutrients.
5. Get enough rest. You do not necessarily need eight hours of sleep per night; six is probably sufficient. When you are overtired you may feel stress more intensely.
6. Learn how to say no. Don't take on more than you can realistically accomplish. Delegate to others when a task becomes overwhelming.
7. Reward yourself. A job well done may be its own reward, but an extra treat can be a great motivator.

The student leaders of today are the community leaders of tomorrow. At the university they balance academic and extra curricular activities; in the future their lives will likely include career, family, and civic responsibilities. By learning how to manage stress now, student leaders prepare for productive lives.