STRESS FACT SHEET

What is stress?
• Stress is an emotional/bodily reaction to physical, psychological or emotional demands.
• Stress is a fact of life.
  - Managed stress can become useful and healthy (viewing events as challenges).
  - Unmanaged stress can become distressful and unhealthy (viewing events as threats).

What are some of the causes of stress?
• Expectations we place on ourselves
• Expectations of others
• Our physical environment -- noise, movement, weather, season changes
• Our internal environment -- academic pressure, frustration, not enough time, decisions, social life

What are some symptoms of unmanaged stress?
• Increased heart rate and blood pressure; feeling tense, irritable, fatigued, or depressed
• Lack of interest and ability to concentrate, apathy
• Avoidance behaviors: abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco

What are ways to manage stress effectively?
• Add balance to life; don't overdo studies or play.
• Know and accept what kind of person you are: strengths and weaknesses.
• Get a thorough physical exam.
• Take "time outs", especially during study.
• Expand your support network, reinforce friendships.
• Exercise regularly.
• Watch your breathing.
• Walk loosely and walk more.
• Learn and practice relaxation skills.
• Study each subject regularly for moderate periods of time.
• Discuss problems with friends, family, dean or counselor.

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