



College Student Survival Skills

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The college experience is full of changes and new situations, which can be fun but also stressful at times. Here are some strategies to help you manage the stress and thrive during your college years.

- **Be open-minded:** The mix of ideas and cultures on a college campus provides a great environment for learning how other people think about the world, and for clarifying your own beliefs and values. Listen with curiosity to new ideas, even if they are different than the ones you grew up with. Attend interesting speaking events or other campus activities to help expand your horizons. Take advantage of opportunities to engage with people you have never met and try new things.
- **Identify and build your coping skills:** Coping skills are strategies we use to manage stressful situations. They can come in the form of physical movement, spending time with friends, journaling, meditating, and other forms of self-care. It's helpful to identify the coping skills you already use, and to try out some new ones as well.
- **Reframe to identify positives:** Our thoughts impact how we feel. Catch your negative thinking and try to think differently by identifying potential benefits or helpful outcomes to problems. This may allow you to develop a new perspective on a difficult situation. Try practicing gratitude and noticing what is going well in your life, instead of focusing only on areas of dissatisfaction.
- **Keep perspective:** Recognize what is important to your values and goals, and what is not worth your time and energy. Ask yourself: *Five years from now, how important will this problem be? How can my values and life goals provide useful information for resolving this problem?*
- **Use campus resources:** Your campus is full of resources and people waiting to support you! Please do not hesitate to take advantage of all they have to offer. These resources can include tutoring and learning support, counseling, career services, residence life, professors, health care providers, and others. Learn where these people are on campus, so you can visit when needed.

Talk to someone who can help! To find a licensed psychologist near you, use PPA's Psychologist Locator at <https://www.papsy.org/locator>. For information on other mental health topics, go to <https://www.papsy.org>, then "Resources" and then "Public Resources". PPA offers these articles for informational purposes only; they are not a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.