Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Let’s just take a minute to talk about mental health. I think it is so great that we are ending the stigma surrounding mental health, and more people are becoming comfortable talking about their struggles. I know it has definitely helped me to find my voice to be able to say, “you know what? Life is tough, and I’m struggling right now, and that’s okay”.

Your mental health can have an impact on your physical and social health. Since mental, physical, and social health are all connected, you should be sure that your mental health is well looked after and stable. As a student, there may be times when you feel overwhelmed with all of the deadlines and exams. Just know it is completely normal to feel this way from time to time! The feeling of stress is a part of everyday life that everyone struggles with at some point; you just need to learn how to cope with it healthily.

Check on your friends as well. If you feel that they are being withdrawn or just not themselves, check on them. Ask them about their mental health. You don’t even have to wait until they are withdrawn to ask them. People can be good at putting on a smile and pretending to be happy even when they feel broken on the inside. Normalize talking about mental health with your friends and family. Check on each other every day. Be there for each other. You truly never know the kind of impact you can have just by offering a listening ear.

Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are conditions which many people suffer from at some point in their life. If you are battling depression and/or anxiety, you should reach
out to someone. Keeping your emotions bottled up may only make your situation worse. Some other techniques you could try to cope with feelings of depression, anxiety, and/or stress are:

- Journaling
- Creating a routine
- Exercising
- Meditation
- Seek professional help

So now you know some ways that you can cope when your mental health is poor, but how do you know when your mental health is starting to deteriorate? Typically, there are some warning signs that you should look out for:

- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Excessive sleeping
- Appetite changes
- Feeling unmotivated

You should address these issues as soon as possible and evaluate the area in which you need more stability. Sometimes just talking to a friend or someone else you can confide in will help bring you clarity and release frustrations.

As a student, learning how to create a balance between your schoolwork and personal life will benefit your mental health. Take study breaks. Maybe even take a whole day to ground yourself and forget about everything for a little while. It can’t be all work and no play. Now, I’m not
saying that you should neglect your schoolwork and head out to a party when you have an exam the next day (this would probably add more stress in the long run). But you should take some time for yourself every now and again and have fun! These are your university years, some of the best years of your life!

Study passionately, make memories, and most importantly, take care of yourself!

- Monica R.