



# Paradigm Shift: Online Learning in a Pandemic

A WCSU stress management plan by Elizabeth Dinielli

# Major differences

- Less socialization/face to face interaction
- Asynchronous format option
- Possible technological glitches/difficulties
- Less accessible for people without adequate access to devices, WiFi
- Difficulties for experiential coursework (student teaching, nursing clinicals)



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# Coping styles

# Unhealthy coping styles

- Increased procrastination, poor time management
- Lack of socialization leads to isolation
- Lack of communication between students and professors
- Online format is much more conducive to sharing answers and cheating
- Not enough time outdoors and away from devices



# Healthy coping styles

- Utilizing a planner to keep track of class times, assignments, due dates
- Checking email and Blackboard consistently to stay up to date
- Making time to do activities outside of school work- socialization, self-care, hobbies
- Reaching out to the professor and/or peers well in advance if you don't understand something
- Keeping a daily routine- consistent wake up/bedtime, getting dressed, bathing/hygiene



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# Resources and strategies



# Campus and community resources

- The Haas Library, Westside Computer Center, and 24-Hour Labs (Midtown and Westside) have computers, WiFi, and printing services available for completing school work
- For off-campus students, local libraries usually have similar resources available at little or no cost
- All WCSU students are entitled to a free UPass that gives free access to local bus and train routes to make transportation easier
  - More information: <https://ctrides.com/u-pass-ct/>
- Blackboard is a hub that is utilized by many professors to disseminate announcements, assignments, and grade material. Staying up to date is crucial.
  - Can be accessed on the web at <https://wcsu.blackboard.com/>
  - Or on the mobile app on the Apple App Store and Google Play
- WCSU students have free access to the entire Microsoft suite (Word, Powerpoint, etc.) for completing assignments. The Google suite is another free resource for this.
- Places like the cafeterias, lounges, Midtown game room, Ives Concert Park, and outdoor picnic tables are great places to meet new people, socialize, and do group work in person

# Stress management strategies



- Online video chatting platforms such as Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Google Meet, Google Duo, WebEx, Discord, and Snapchat video calls are just a few ways to hang out with friends or do school work if you cannot meet in person
- Planners and bullet journals are available at places like Staples, Walmart, and Target to help students with organizing and remembering assignments
- Students can also use digital tools such as the Outlook calendar, built-in calendar apps, the Reminders app, or other to-do list apps to keep track of classes, events, and assignments
- The school Outlook email can be accessed through a web browser or the Outlook mobile app. The mobile app can be configured to send notifications so that you don't have to check it randomly.
- Plan on taking asynchronous classes with friends, or make friends with people in your asynchronous classes. You can serve as a resource to each other to stay motivated and ask for help if you don't understand something.
- Turn in assignments early if you can so that if there is a tech glitch you will have time to correct it



# Self-care, planning, and prevention



- Take frequent breaks while doing school work, especially if it is work on a computer
  - 20/20/20: every 20 minutes, look at something at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds to rest eyes
  - Taking breaks to stretch and walk around prevents burnout, soreness, and stiffness
- Plan for time every day to do basic self-care
  - Get enough sleep
  - Eat nutritious meals
  - Bathing and other hygiene practices
  - Physical movement/exercise
  - Time outdoors/fresh air
  - Treat yourself to something nice- do a facial, buy yourself a little present, watch your favorite TV show
- Keep a clean and neat living space- having a messy or dirty space adds to overall stress and decreases wellbeing
- Stay on top of assignments- this will help you avoid penalties for late assignments and a pile of unfinished work at the end of the semester



# Self-care, planning, and prevention (continued)

- Build and maintain a social support system:
  - Plan for time to socialize with friends, family, and pets
  - Isolation can leave you feeling disconnected, lonely, and depressed
  - Even digital socialization can alleviate these negative effects and promote better emotional wellbeing
- Plan for time to totally disconnect from school work
  - Do not check email during this time
  - If possible, stay away from devices completely
  - Activities like going outside for a walk, reading, or doing other hobbies can help to give your brain a break from the stress and rigor of academics
- Utilize an online cloud service like Google Drive or Microsoft OneDrive to store documents
  - This way you can access documents remotely through different devices
  - This also serves as a backup in case your device is damaged

Most of all... Be gentle with yourself. Remember that we are in the middle of a pandemic and struggling is perfectly normal!

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Remind yourself that you are trying your best, and that your efforts are valid. You may not succeed at everything, but you will learn and grow from these experiences.



“This too shall pass...” One day  
this will all be over and you will  
be stronger and more resilient  
for having lived through it.

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For now, just take it one day at a time. Together, we'll get through this.

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