

Student Wellness Program

Procrastination

You're sitting down to work on an important project with an impending deadline, but suddenly your plants need watering, your closet needs organizing, or you must watch that viral video that your friend sent yesterday. This is procrastination - a coping mechanism that most of us use at some point. Procrastination is chronically avoiding tasks and actively looking for distractions. It involves delaying acting even though we are aware that this will make things worse.

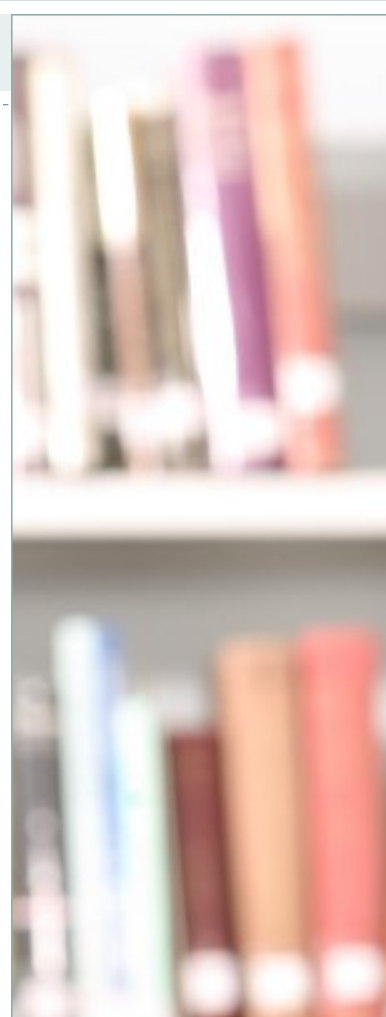
So why do we procrastinate even though we know that it will ultimately take us farther away from accomplishing our goals? At the root of procrastination are several factors including anxiety, low feelings of self-worth, lack of structure, difficulty motivating oneself and fixation on negative thoughts. We procrastinate because we dislike doing something (or believe we will dislike it), feel overwhelmed, find the task confusing, or fear that we will not be able to complete the task perfectly. Procrastination is a way to avoid this anxiety inducing task and make the immediate feelings of discomfort (temporarily) disappear. However, it is a coping strategy that does not address the issue at hand, and worsens the challenge because it doesn't address the underlying root of the problem.

To address procrastination, first develop awareness of your procrastination cues, whether it's anxiety about the task, lack of a plan or distracting elements such as social media. From there pick some strategies from below, try them out, and see what is effective for you. You may need to go back to the list and try other strategies with the goal of having a few that are your go-tos.

Strategies to address procrastination:

- Prioritize tasks – make sure you get to the most important things.
- Break tasks into smaller, more manageable parts. Assign deadlines for each part.
- Create a schedule and stick to it – make sure it's realistic. Work backwards from the due date.
- Create a to-do list and cross off tasks as you accomplish them so that you can see your progress.
- Work on tasks during the time of day that you are most productive.

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Student Wellness Program

Piscataway (732) 235-5933

Newark (973) 972-5429

Voorhees (856) 770-5750

<http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/swp/index.html>

Student Counseling
Educational Training
Consultations
Psychiatry Services
Orientations
Crisis Debriefing

Strategies to address procrastination, continued:

- Set reasonable expectations and goals – striving for perfection can prevent you from completing tasks.
- Focus on starting a task rather than finishing it. Staying in the present moment, instead of worrying about the future, can help to stave off anxiety.
- Track your progress toward accomplishing your goals. This will help you avoid the feeling that the work before you is endless.
- If there is a particular task that you dread doing, force yourself to do it early on. This will make other tasks seem easier and doable and prevent you from lingering on the difficult one.
- Use positive peer pressure such as a study group or accountability buddy.
- Replace negative thoughts about how you don't want to do something with positive thoughts about the benefits of completing a task.
- Reward yourself when you complete a task on time (Ice cream! Silly cat videos!).
- Schedule in breaks and fun time so you know they will happen.

SWP SERVICES

The Student Wellness Program (SWP) is available to you and any family members residing in your household, should you be experiencing any stress based events.

All services are free and confidential. Your school has already provided this as another benefit to you. No information is shared with your academic program without written consent from you.

Not only is the SWP available for concerns related to stress, we also work with individuals, couples and families for reasons such as personal difficulties, relationship concerns, grief, anxiety, parenting issues, time management, and substance abuse assessments. Whatever your concerns, we are here for you. Currently the SWP is providing telehealth services via telephone or video. Feel free to reach out to us by telephone if you have any questions, concerns or would like to schedule an appointment.

We are a phone call away...

Piscataway:

(732) 235-5933

Newark:

(973) 972-5429

Voorhees

(Stratford/Camden Campus):

(856) 770-5750

