

## Student Wellness Program

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

### Perfectionism

*Perfectionism comprises internally motivated beliefs that striving for perfection and being perfect are important (Rallis, Wang & Barton, 2021).*

These beliefs use a set of internal standards that we use to assess our worth or the worth of our product. Notice the word “internal” in the above statements. Perfectionism inherently comes from within. While we may have external pressures to be productive, successful, and even “perfect”, we need to ask ourselves if this is truly a reasonable expectation. Even more importantly, we need to examine if our drive for perfection is actually inhibiting our ability to get things done, or affecting our overall physical and mental wellbeing.

A common example of the drive for perfectionism affecting our progress is that of procrastination. Procrastination can be our instinct to do literally anything but the task at hand. While it can be viewed as “lazy”, this instinct is more likely a result of the idea that only an optimal environment will allow us to accomplish our task or the idea of embarking on this perfect task completely overwhelms us to the point we are paralyzed to do anything at all. Ultimately, procrastination is often a fear of failure to be perfect.

Perfectionism can also contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety. Individuals may obsess about how others perceive them, to the point where they find social and/or professional interactions difficult or even impossible. Imposter Syndrome is closely associated with perfectionism and the environment of graduate higher education can exacerbate these feelings via high standards, constant evaluation and comparison to others.

Addressing perfectionism is a multifaceted approach:

- 1) Try to recognize your beliefs and tendencies surrounding the idea of being perfect.
- 2) Determine where the pressure to be perfect is stemming from—is it internal, external or both?
- 3) Ask yourself if this is an objectively realistic expectation? *Our minds can convince us of anything, so a way to reframe the question to elicit a more objective answer would be asking yourself if you would expect or demand this of others in your life?*
- 4) And in the case of a project, if you are still feeling immobilized, break it down into more manageable tasks.

While easier said than done, the most important thing to do in addressing perfectionism is to give yourself grace and the space to make mistakes. For in reality, no one is perfect.



RUTGERS HEALTH

### Student Wellness Program

Piscataway (732) 235-5933

Newark (973) 972-5429

Voorhees (856) 770-5750

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Student Counseling  
Educational Training  
Consultations  
Psychiatry Services  
Orientations  
Crisis Debriefing

# 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.

At its root, perfectionism isn't really about a deep love of being meticulous. It's about fear. Fear of making a mistake. Fear of disappointing others. Fear of failure. Fear of success.

Michael Law

*Youth Dynamics*



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