

RUTGERS
University Behavioral
Health Care

Published by

Student Wellness Program

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Services:

- Student Counseling
- Educational Training
- Consultations
- Psychiatry Services
- Orientations
- Crisis Debriefing

Timely Topic:

The Psychology of Venting

Sometimes we keep things in, feeling uncomfortable with vulnerability or conflict. Or we may hold beliefs that letting out our feelings is a sign of weakness. Either way, holding it in can be detrimental to both our physical and mental wellbeing.

The benefits of venting come from utilizing it as a coping mechanism to manage stress. By doing so we can feel validated and not alone. However, there are some important things to remember to make your expressions a healthy experience for all involved.

Keep in mind that healthy venting is a two-way street when done with someone else. One sided expressions can leave the individual receiving the vent feeling used and/or abused.

If you feel as though you could use validation, connection or advice, then be intentional with whom and how you are interacting. Check to see if they are in a place to receive it. Let them know what you need. “I don’t need you to fix it, I just need to express my feelings” or “I would love your advice, but I am also feeling pretty emotional about this, can I share my feelings and then get your thoughts on the situation?”

Venting or expression of feelings can also be done in a more solitary manner, through art or physical activity, for example. It can be a healthy way of expression especially when you may feel as though you don’t have the capacity for reciprocal venting, or the feelings are particularly intense. Check in with where you are and what you need. Assessing and recognizing your needs demonstrates insight and empathy for both self and others.

Equally important is to assess your needs. Are you ok being on the receiving end? If so, create a safe and healthy environment by practicing empathy (for both self and the other person) as well as utilizing active listening skills.

Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse is not venting and never ok. Actions that are abusive cannot later be dismissed as “just blowing off steam.” For venting to be healthy, it should be intentional and mutually agreed upon.

So rather than holding those frustrations and feelings inside, let it out!

Adapted from: <https://www.sagu.edu/thoughthub/the-psychology-of-venting>



SWP SERVICES

Remember the SWP is available to you and any family member 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 management, parenting issues, time management, and substance abuse assessments.

Whatever your concerns, we are here for you. 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...

(732) 235-5933