

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING

Mindfulness, Meditation, Introductory and Advanced Courses



Open to all Thomas Jefferson University students and House Staff

The SPCC & JeffHELP have been offering mindfulness classes led by Randi Platt, M.Ed. for the past 2 years. Based on your feedback from these classes, Randi has offered to run a follow-up to the introductory classes. She will also be offering another intro course for anyone looking to participate. See all dates/times/fees below, and click on the links for more information and to register. Attendance is limited to 15 participants. Courses cost \$50 per student.

Introductory Mindfulness Meditation

In this 4 session course, students will be introduced to the concepts of mindfulness through an introductory lecture and practice of meditation. The first class will be in person and the remaining three sessions will be held via video chat.

Classes will be 1 hour in length held as follows: Tuesdays, January 12,19,26 & February 2, from 5:30-6:30 PM

Advanced Mindfulness Meditation

In this 4 session course, the concepts of insight meditation will be introduced. Students will be guided towards deepening their motivation and practice.

Student must have a regular meditation practice or have taken the introductory class.

Classes will all be 1 hour in length and held in person as follows: Wednesdays, January 20, 27, February 3 & 10, 6:15 - 7:15 PM.

Exploring Art, Insight, and Medical Humanities

833 Chestnut Street, Suite 210
Room B-01

Open to all Thomas Jefferson University students

Join us for any or all of the events in this series of creative workshops offered by the SPCC and exploring art, insight and the medical humanities. You must click on the link to register to participate, as attendance is limited to 20 participants. These workshops have been funded by the Asano Grant for Collaborative and Compassionate Health Care and are facilitated by Sondra Rosenberg, ATR-BC, Creative Arts Therapies Supervisor at The Renfrew Center. Pizza dinner will be provided. For more information, please contact [Dr. Shawn Blue](#).

Coping Toolboxes Workshop, Monday, January 25, 2016, 4:00-5:30 PM

Participants will be guided in the creation of “Coping Toolboxes”. Using artistic materials, participants will decorate and customize a box to “fill” with different coping skills for managing stress and emotional triggers. All art and creative materials will be provided.

Altered Books/Creative Journaling, February 22, 2016, 4:00-5:30 PM

Participants will be guided in learning techniques for making altered books and learn a variety of approaches to self-exploration through creative journaling. All art and creative materials will be provided.

Creative Approaches to Anxiety, March 14, 2015, 4:00-6:00 PM

Participants will be guided through an art-based workshop based on a creative approach to understanding anxiety. The session will include relaxation exercises and a main project that addresses participants' individual experience of anxiety and how to work through it. All art and creative materials will be provided.

Alter Egos, April 18, 2016, 4:00-6:00 PM

Participants will be guided in an art-based workshop that will explore the concept of alter egos, or other selves that display characteristics that are different from how we generally present ourselves. Participants will be guided through a process of identifying parts of themselves that would be liberating to express through an alter ego – aspects which we hide, fear and reject. All art and creative materials will be provided.

Elements of Wholeness, May 18, 4:00-6:00 PM

Participants will be guided on a journey of deep reflection and healing, using the wheel of elements as our guide and utilizing art-making, writing, discussion, movement and meditation practices. All art and creative materials will be provided.

UPCOMING EVENTS

How to survive a Breakup

“Tuesday, January 26, 2016

5:00 - 6:00 PM

833 Chestnut Street, Suite 230

Group Room 2304



Join therapists Alanna Gardner, MFT & Danielle Adinolfi, MFT as they take you through 10 sure fire steps to get over your breakup today.

Light refreshments will be served. Please [click here](#) to register.

App of the Month



Edjing (Available for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#))

De-stress by expressing your creative side!

Edjing app allows you to be your own DJ, right from your hand held device. Mix and scratch instantly thanks to edjing's console and its palette of over 20 DJ effects and functions.

Monthly Poll Question

How do you de-stress during the holiday season?



[Click here to vote!](#)

Last Month's Poll Results

When asked, "How are you really feeling today?"

- * 49% responded Tired
- * 32% responded Stressed
- * 18% responded Grateful
- * 15% responded Contemplative
- * 12% responded Content
- * 10% responded Jealous
- * 9% responded Hurt
- * 3% responded Bored

Resource of the Month

Rx: De-stress

Written by Megan Longenberger, Second Year Medical Student, Active Minds Member

The pupils dilate, respiration increases, and blood courses through vessels feeding the skeletal muscles. You are ready to impress the interviewer, ace the next exam, or outrun the bear. This is the stress response, a series of physiological and psychological changes that have evolved to help people survive in the face of a perceived threat. These changes, sparked by sympathetic activation and hormone secretion, are typically transient. Once the threat is gone, the neuroendocrine axis is inhibited and the body is able to re-establish homeostasis. Unfortunately, this survival mechanism has yet to adapt to a modern world filled with continuous stressors that often seem out of one's control. As pressures at work or school, relationship strains, and financial woes keep stress hormone levels elevated, the once beneficial short-term changes made to the mind and body become persistent and malignant.

Stress is most often associated with its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral symptoms. It is common for those experiencing stress to feel overwhelmed and isolated, anxious or depressed. In an attempt to reduce these unpleasant sensations, some turn to food, alcohol, or drugs while others may oversleep or procrastinate. It is important to realize that the effects of chronic stress extend far beyond its impact on emotion and behavior. Constant arousal takes a toll on the body, impeding the functioning of the immune and cardiovascular systems and exacerbating pre-existing health conditions. Chronic stress has been linked to high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity through its effects on physiology and behavior. Chronic stress is also thought to alter brain structure and function. It can increase the risk of developing psychiatric illnesses, such as depression and addiction, and may even play a role in the pathogenesis of dementia. The mind and body are intimately connected, and alterations in one will undoubtedly impact the other. Learning how to efficiently manage stress is therefore an essential component to disease prevention.

Stress management is both a science and an art. Although there are lifestyle modifications proven to control the stress response, each individual must discover which techniques are most effective at controlling his or her stress-related symptoms.

Make a Connection

Many people find it beneficial to reach out to others during times of stress. Social engagement is a highly evolved strategy that can turn off the "fight-or-flight" response and increase feelings of calmness and safety. Opening up to family or friends may be challenging at first, but will ultimately strengthen relationships in addition to reducing stress. For those who are not comfortable confiding in their close companions or loved-ones, mental health care

providers can offer a non-judgmental ear to listen and can provide one with evidence-based coping strategies.

Get Moving

Participating in physical activity is another healthy way to deal with day-to-day stressors. Whether one is walking, swimming, or dancing, the brain is triggered to release endorphins to boost the mood and provide a sense of well-being. Exercising mindfully, by focusing on breathing and body movements during activity, provides additional health benefits. Yoga and meditation can also be used to counter the effects of sympathetic arousal and focus attention on the present moment.

Take a Break

Eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and setting time aside for relaxation and fun will reduce stress further and improve overall health. Try eliminating the use of stimulants like caffeine and nicotine, and start putting good sleep hygiene into practice. Read a magazine, watch a television show, take a few deep breaths, and remember to never feel guilty about taking a break. The stressors may not be going anywhere, but that does not mean one is doomed to suffer from their adverse effects on health. Taking the time to care for the mind now will ensure a happy and healthy life for the future!

Related Articles

Mah, L., Szabuniewicz, C., & Fiocco, A. J. (2016). Can anxiety damage the brain? *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 29(1), 56-63. doi:10.1097/YCO.0000000000000223

Chandola, T., Brunner, E., & Marmot, M. (2006). Chronic stress at work and the metabolic syndrome: Prospective study. *BMJ (Clinical Research Ed.)*, 332(7540), 521-525.

doi:bmj.38693.435301

<http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understanding-the-stress-response>

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-body.aspx>

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-causes-and-effects.htm>

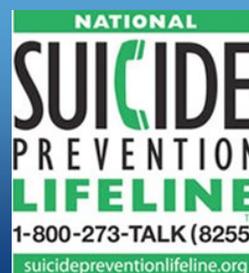
For more information @

JeffHELP contact

Rose Milani

Project Coordinator

jeffhelpinfo@jefferson.edu



JeffHELP is funded under award 1U79SM060468 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government