



How to help you acclimate to online learning as well as how to take care of yourself during these uncertain times.

In this edition, you'll find:

- **Self-Care: How to Protect Your Mental Health During Uncertain Times**
- **Tips for Successful Online Learning**
- **Academic Integrity**
- **Tech Tools for Online Learning**
- **Who to Contact**

## **Self-Care: How to Protect Your Mental Health During Uncertain Times**

### *Recognizing Signs of Stress*

#### **YOUR BEHAVIOR:**

- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

### YOUR BODY:

- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

### YOUR EMOTIONS:

- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

### YOUR THINKING:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions

### *Coping with Stress*

- **Keep things in perspective and get all the facts.** Limit the amount of time you spend reading or watching things which aren't making you feel better. Perhaps decide on a specific time to check in with the news. Avoid misinformation - stay informed by sticking to trusted sources of information, like the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Center for Disease Control](#) websites.
- **Have breaks from social media and mute things which are triggering.** Mute key words which might be triggering on Twitter and unfollow or mute accounts. Mute WhatsApp groups and hide Facebook posts and feeds if you find them too overwhelming.
- **Wash your hands - but not excessively.** To eliminate all traces of the virus on your hands, a quick scrub and a rinse won't cut it. Refer to the CDC fact sheet for accurate information on effective hand-washing.
- **Stay connected with people.** Make sure you have updated contact info for the people you care about - phone numbers, emails, social media accounts - and agree to regular check-in times so you can feel connected.
- **Keep yourself healthy.** Eat healthy foods, drink water, and avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol. Don't use tobacco or illegal drugs. Get enough sleep and plenty of physical exercise.
- **Avoid burnout.** Now more than ever, it's important to have down time. Access sunlight and nature whenever possible (and prudent). Engage in hobbies. Read for pleasure. Take a bath. Listen to music. Create. Talk about your feelings with loved ones and friends often. Remember to laugh.

- **Be open to trying new things, like meditation or yoga.** Take the time to explore new methods in your efforts to cope - try yoga, meditation, or deep breathing exercises.



1 - Time: 8:17

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# Tips for Successful Online Learning



## *Strategies for Online Learning Success*

Currently, we're all dealing with a wide range of emotions as we face unknowns and academic disruptions. Try to be patient with yourself, your classmates, your instructors, and your academic institution during this time. Focus on taking care of yourself and make a plan to adjust your study habits as we work through the kinks. Use the strategies below to help make the most of your online learning experience.

1. **Stay organized** - Keep track of how your courses are changing by developing a chart/schedule that's easy to update. There are a wide variety of tools you can use to help in this category. Make sure you have all the course material required; if you don't, locate it or reach out to the course director for clarification.
2. **Set a schedule** - Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. Stay on top of course deadlines and make sure to include time for self-care. Be aware of the of various touch points during the day: course announcements, meeting times, due dates, login and attendance, office hours. Use the tools you have at your disposal to develop a schedule that works for you.
3. **Avoid multitasking** - You may think you're a master of multitasking, but research shows only about 2% of the population can multitask. Some of the downsides of multitasking include spending more time on assignments, likelihood of making mistakes increases, and you'll remember less because it doesn't get encoded into your brain.
4. **Create a designated study space** - Not only will this help you establish a routine, but it will also help you mentally prepare for shifting into academic mode. Make sure you have what you need to be successful within arm's reach, including reliable technology and your course material. If possible, avoid setting it up in places where you usually go to relax.
5. **Eliminate distractions** - Consider turning off your cellphone and closing any browser tabs or applications that aren't relevant to the task at hand. If you struggle with resisting temptation, download a website blocker.

6. **Actively participate** - Participation will help you better understand course materials and better engage with your classmates. Check in often to make sure you don't miss updates or announcements. Speak up when you have questions and pay attention to deadlines. Participation will most likely count toward your grades!
7. **Leverage your network** - Online learning can sometimes make you feel isolated, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Collaboration and interaction with your classmates make for a better online learning experience for all involved. Establish virtual study groups. Partner up with a study/accountability buddy that you work well with and help each other - with reminders, encouragement, virtual study sessions, and/or exam prep.
8. **Working with a group/team** - Remote collaboration is easy thanks to some of the tech tools available (listed below). When working with your classmates remotely, remember the following tips: Don't procrastinate. Meet regularly. Set a purpose for your meeting and use a shared notes doc. Determine what tools you will use and the roles each of you will play when meeting. Keep videos open when possible. Check on each other and ask for help when you need it.
9. **Make the most of virtual resources (lectures, assigned reading, etc.)** - Use the resources provided by your instructor. Watch videos, listen to podcasts, and make the most of the supplemental reading(s) to ensure you get what you need from the course. Explore online resources to help strengthen your foundation knowledge.
10. **Be flexible and consider trading your current strategies for new ones** - Methods you use to listen/learn/study in a face-to-face course may not work the same for you in an online learning environment. Be willing to try new ones.
11. **Figure out how you learn best (and I don't mean learning styles)** - Are you a morning person or a night owl? Do you need silence to learn or do you prefer to have background noise? Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information help you best grasp new concepts and employ relevant study strategies.
12. **Be proactive** - If you have problems or questions, DO NOT WAIT TO ADDRESS THEM. We are here to help, but first we have to know help is needed. If you know you study better with classmates, start a virtual study group. If you know you'll have questions, locate contact information for faculty, staff, and tech support before your course starts. Get an early start on your assignments.
13. **Be persistent** - Don't give up when you run up against technical issues or other challenges. Often times a simple reboot will be the cure for what ails you, but for when it's not - we have a support system in place for you.
14. **Be aware of your tech needs and limitations** - Stay on top of emails and announcements regarding technology. It's also important to be aware of any applications or updates that you need to participate in your online course. If you're not tech savvy, think about what you need to do to prepare yourself for online learning.
15. **Get dressed** - This may be the hardest one on the list, as most of us find ourselves in pajamas/leggings/sweats/athletic pants as soon as we hit the door at the end of the day. **Fight the urge and put on pants!** It will help you develop a sense of normalcy and maybe even save you some embarrassment.

## *Golden Rules of Proper Netiquette*

- **Respect your instructor(s)** - In every email or discussion, treat your instructor with the same amount of respect as you would if face-to-face. This includes using the correct title.
- **Do your research** - Before asking an instructor or classmate the answer to an unknown question, make sure you've sufficiently exhausted your resources before adding work for someone else.
- **User proper grammar** - Even when responding to a message board thread, remember that this is college-level communication. You should avoid slang, misspellings, or overly informal language.
- **Be aware of tone** - Sarcasm is very hard to translate across a screen, particularly to people who haven't met you before or who don't know your sense of humor. Be mindful of your tone when sending messages to others.
- **Avoid all caps** - Like sarcasm, the use of all capital letters is difficult to translate across a computer screen and could come across as yelling.
- **Don't share personal information** - This rule applies to personal information about yourself or anything a fellow student has confided.
- **Avoid sending too many mass emails** - Group emails can be effective for sharing relevant information with people who actually need it, but ask yourself if every person on the email list will benefit from the information before sending it.
- **Always explain yourself** - One of the difficulties of online learning can be making sure people understand what you're trying to convey and that it's in the correct tone. Be mindful of the words you use and consider having a friend or family member read the text before submitting.
- **Be respectful** - One of the main purposes of college is to help students expand their world views and encounter opinions they may not have considered. Whether or not a you agree with a classmate's viewpoint, it's important to be respectful and attempt to have a mutually beneficial dialogue.
- **Pay attention to existing comments** - If responding to a thread discussion, you should review all existing comments so you don't dredge up a topic that's already been covered extensively.

## **Discussion Board Netiquette**

Students who are enrolled in online courses are often expected to utilize the Discussion Board or other forms of online communication. It is critical that each student participating in online courses follow the following **Netiquette** recommendations for posting messages and responses on the Discussion Board.

1. **Read and Reflect:** The instructor may post questions to the Discussion Board that are related to the week's objectives. Read the questions that are posted thoroughly **before** posting your responses. In addition, take a few moments to consider your thoughts, and how best to express your opinion. Challenge yourself to stay on topic, and to not let your responses drift into secondary topic areas.
2. **Proper Writing:** Proper writing skills are required in both academic and professional settings. Writing online is not an exception. When posting to the Discussion Board, use the same standards of proper grammar and expression you would use in a formal paper.

**Your postings should not resemble text messages, Facebook posts, Tweets, etc.** Before you submit your posts, review your writing for grammar, clarity, and general etiquette. Consult with your instructor to determine if citations are required with your postings.

3. **Drafts:** To prevent losing your work and to give yourself a chance to proofread, I suggest you write the first draft of your posting in a Word document, and then copy the post to the Discussion Board. Please remember that once you post a comment it is **public**, so consider your responses carefully.
4. **Avoid Personal Attacks:** We may be discussing topics about which many of you have strong opinions. We may even discuss topics that represent one or more students' personal life experiences. That, coupled with the stress of the health crisis we are currently dealing with add to your stress level and could cause you to respond in ways you normally would think twice about. Postings that are of an overly-personal nature, or which engage in attacking rhetoric will not be tolerated. Post responses that are grounded in facts, and the assigned outlines and readings. When your opinion is asked for, provide it honestly, and in a professional manner. Be specific about points with which you agree or disagree, rather than speaking in generalizations. Avoid responses that are based purely in emotion. Most importantly, post responses that are respectful of different views.
5. **Be Cordial:** Avoid sarcasm, offensive language, and any type of tone that conveys disrespect. In addition, give consideration to how you present your message. The way we write serves as a signal about the message we intend to send. Avoid using multiple exclamation points, all caps, etc. to try to emphasize your point. Sometimes, it helps to add an appropriate emoji to comments to denote the spirit behind the post (*consult with your instructor(s) before including emojis in your posts*). It is sometimes difficult to discuss controversial issues in a respectful and polite manner, but it is essential if we are to understand different points of view. And, if we do not attempt to understand one another...well, where does that leave us?

### **Participating in Virtual Coursework**



In response to potential campus closures, you may be asked to join your coursework virtually. There are a variety of ways faculty may facilitate this.

### **Live Video-Conferencing Sessions**

There are a number of **video conference tools** available to you and your faculty. Some of these include *Zoom, Bongo, Adobe Connect, Google, Microsoft Teams, or Skype*.

To get started, you will need a stable internet connection, a web cam, and a microphone.

Accessing these applications is easy, in many cases you won't even have to download anything. It will likely be as simple as signing up for an account or using your university credentials to log in.

#### **Tips to Keep in Mind:**

- Log in 5-10 minutes early to get familiar with the application and test your settings.
- You should plan to join the session in a distraction-free environment. This means that you should be in a quiet, well-lit room and plan on clearing your calendar for the length of the session.
- Ensure that you are positioned in front of the camera where the lighting is strong enough to illuminate your face and where the visual background is not distracting.
- Remember to mute your audio when not speaking. Depending on how your faculty sets up the session, you may not have audio access. If this is the case, you will need to use the chat functionality to communicate.
- Use a wired internet connection if possible. If you have a weak or unstable wireless connection, you can turn off your video as needed to save bandwidth.
- Use the chat area for communications to the group or individuals, just remember to double check the intended audience before sending any messages.
- If you are screen-sharing, make sure you close all other applications to avoid inadvertently sharing the wrong information.
- It may also be helpful, if you have roommates that are also classmates, to use one device to stream the lecture in order to cut the bandwidth use. If possible, cast it to your TV. This could help make it easier to for everyone to see.

### **Accessing Courses Through Canvas**

In addition to attending your classes via a live online session, you may also be asked to access your course through Canvas. Here are some things that you can likely expect as you experience your course in an online format.

- **Readings:** Faculty will likely assign readings to help further your understanding of the concepts. Readings in your online courses may include *Physical Textbooks, Online Texts, News or Journal Articles, White Papers, or Case Studies*.
- **Online Video:** Whether it's an introduction to the course or module from your instructor or you are asked to watch videos as part of your lecture materials, online video helps bring course material to life. Many online video platforms have settings that you can adjust to either speedup or slow down the video playback. Use this to your advantage to speed up to get to the point faster or to slow down and spend needed time grasping difficult subject-matter
- **Discussion Boards:** The free exchange of ideas and discussions about relevant educational topics, guided by an instructor, is one of the best ways to learn and solidify concepts. It is very likely your online course will have discussion boards (sometimes



called discussion forums) for just that purpose. As with face-to-face educational discussions, it's important to stay on topic and keep a professional discourse.

- **Assignments:** Assignments in online courses are not that different from those in a face-to-face class. You may be assigned anything from essays and article reviews to large-scale projects and research papers. These will provide you ample opportunities to enhance your knowledge of the topics and apply learning in tangible ways. Remember to always check your assignment rubric if available to give you helpful insight into what is expected for that assignment. Make sure you communicate with your instructor and classmates to alleviate any confusion.

### *Common Mistakes to Avoid*

- **Assuming your classes will be easy:** Online classes are just as rigorous as face-to-face classes. Give it the same time and attention as you normally would (or more if you are unfamiliar with online learning).
- **Ignoring a course's technical requirements:** Make sure all applications and devices are up-to-date.
- **Not creating a dedicated study space:** Set up your study space early to make the most of your time and to avoid distractions.
- **Procrastinating on assignment:** Create a framework for time management so you can complete work in an efficient manner and balance school with other responsibilities.
- **Believing you're all on your own:** Remember, we are all in this together. Your instructors and classmates are as stressed as you are and doing the best they can to get through it.
- **Thinking you'll get away with cheating:** Online learning platforms are very sophisticated and students aren't nearly as skilled at cheating as they think they are. Don't do it. Remember, the honor code here at South and the Oath you will be taking as a pharmacist. **JUST. DON'T. DO. IT.**
- **Not being an active participant in class:** Not participating does a disservice to you, your classmates, and your instructor. Start slow. Try voluntarily answering one question or contributing to one discussion per class and work up from there. If you're still more comfortable conversing outside of class, consider setting up a weekly chat with a few classmates on Skype or another messaging platform.
- **Losing motivation:** Staying motivated while in the midst of crisis will be a challenge, but you have to make sure you are keeping your end goals in mind. Be social both in and out of the virtual classroom and surround yourself (virtually) with people who remind you what they're working towards. Remember, this too shall pass.

### *Online Resources to Help Sharpen Your Study & Test-Taking Skills*

- [5 Test Taking Strategies for Online Students](#) Western Governors University has the inside scoop for online learners.
- [10 Study Hacks for Final Exams](#) Business Insider is here to help students succeed at the end of the semester.
- [College Student Study Skills Guide](#) AffordableCollegesOnline.org provides a comprehensive look at all the tips and tricks a student can use to study smartly.
- [How to Ace Your Exams](#) Huffington Post has a list of 20 fail-proof tactics.

- [HowtoStudy.org](#) Provides extensive information on organization, study environments, procrastination, and stress management.
- [Sharpen Your Study Skills](#) Use the University of Arkansas for Medical Science's tips to find success.
- [Study Guides and Strategies](#) This exhaustive website is a must-use for online students.
- [Test Taking Tips](#) Find the best ways of not only memorizing, but retaining information for an exam.
- [Tips for Taking Online Exams](#) An excellent resource for students who want to be prepared when they take their first online test.
- [HowtoStudy.com](#) Offers students helpful tips and study skills articles to help them improve.

## *Strategies & Online Resources to Reduce Student Stress*

### **Strategies to Reduce College Stress**

- **Take frequent breaks** - Even if you have a mountain of schoolwork, step away from the computer at least once every two hours and take a short walk, make a phone call, or enjoy a small snack.
- **Make realistic plans** - Rather than staying up all night responding to discussions, create a plan of what you can realistically do while still retaining information and don't sacrifice sleep.
- **Turn off technology** - At the end of the day, put away computers and cell phones and take time to relax by stretching or reading a book.
- **BREATHE** - If you feel your stress levels rising, take three deep breaths with your eyes closed and refocus on what you need to accomplish.
- **Break up tasks** - Rather than thinking about every single thing you need to do, break down tasks into 15 or 30-minute segments and focus on accomplishing individual, smaller goals.
- **Exercise** - In addition to short walks, try to spend at least an hour or two per week engaging in some type of physical activity to release endorphins.
- **Meditate** - Taking 10 minutes at the start or end of each day to refocus your brain and find calmness can drastically help reduce anxiety surrounding assignments and exams.
- **Focus on the positives** - It may seem like you have way too much to do sometimes, but don't focus on that. Instead think about all the good things an education brings.
- **Virtually visit your friends and loved ones** - We know that laughter is the best medicine for many ailments, so make sure you're not without social breaks.
- **Control your time** - If you feel there isn't enough structure provided by online learning, create your own version of class times and study sessions to feel more organized.

### **Online Resources to Reduce College Stress**

- [7 Ways to Handle Stress as an Online Student](#) This article provided by All Women Talk is focused on helping female online students avoid stress.
- [Virtual Stress; Dealing with Online Classes](#) This article is specifically tailored to students trying to complete their educations via distance learning.

- [Managing Exam Stress](#) The University of St. Andrews has a thoughtful list of activities and tips to minimize stress surrounding exam time.
- [Stress and Student Success](#) This essay by Inside Higher Ed looks at how stress affects students' ability to excel in learning.
- [Stress Management](#) Austin Community College provides a range of information about different stress personalities, symptoms, and solutions and provides a plan for managing stress.
- [CampusMindWorks](#) Created by the University of Michigan, this website helps students learn how to take care of themselves and manage stress.
- [Surviving Stress and Anxiety in College & Beyond](#) LearnPsychology offers students concrete tips based on research to help them cope with feeling overwhelmed.
- [Mindful.org](#) is making the 30-day online program "Find Calm and Nourish Resilience" free through June 30 (usually would be \$125 for lifetime access). They describe the program as "30 days of mindfulness to calm anxious thoughts, strengthen emotional resilience, and cultivate compassion and connection." Details and signup available here: [Find Calm and Nourish Resilience](#).
- [mindbodygreen](#) is offering classes on yoga, meditation, Reiki healing, and fear/anxiety management [here](#). In response to the many school closures taking place, [Down Dog](#) is offering all of their apps **completely free until July 1st for all students and teachers** (K-12 and college) so that they can have access to wellness at home through the end of the semester. Down Dog offers various forms and levels of yoga instruction as well as a variety of exercises options. Click [here](#) to register for educator/student access. From boot camp to yoga, the [YMCA](#) launches 60 free online classes for people stuck at home. Click [here](#) to browse on-demand videos. For live classes, connect to the YMCA via Facebook [here](#).
- [Officevibe](#) has provided some information on **17 Desk Stretches That'll (Almost) Replace Going to the Gym**. Click [here](#) to check them out!
- The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP) lists U.S. and international support groups as a public service. We do not run, recommend, endorse or fund any of the groups listed. International listings are available for Australia, Brazil, Canada and China. If you are struggling and would like help locating a support group, click [here](#).
- [Gaining Perspective on Negative Events \(practice\)](#): Take a step back and analyze your feelings without ruminating.
- [Mindful Breathing \(practice\)](#): A way to build resilience to stress, anxiety, and anger.
- [Expressive Writing \(practice\)](#): A simple, effective way to work through an emotional challenge.
- [How to Transform Stress into Courage and Connection \(article\)](#): Learn why fight-or-flight isn't our only built-in response to stress, and how we can find reserves of strength and kindness in crisis, from Kelly McGonigal.
- [Five Science-Backed Strategies to Build Resilience \(article\)](#): Learn about 12 different exercises you can do when facing difficulty.
- [Seven Ways to Help Someone with Anxiety \(article\)](#): Some people are more anxious than others during these times. Find out different ways you can support loved ones who are struggling.

- [Step Away from Anxiety \(podcast\)](#): Author Raina Telgemeier works on getting out of her head when the nerves hit.
- [How to Find Your Silver Linings \(podcast\)](#): Poet and “recovering pessimist” Maggie Smith practices not fixating on what’s going wrong.
- [Do You Know How to Eat a Raisin? \(podcast\)](#): When life seems nothing but chaos, slowing down can be powerful. Luke Burbank tries a unique meditation practice with a single raisin.
- [How to Connect with Your Body \(podcast\)](#): Taking a moment to check in with our physical selves can bring a sense of calm, as actor Daniel Wu discovers.

### Online Resources for Fostering Connection

- [Active Listening \(practice\)](#): Connect with a partner through empathy and understanding.
- [Compassion Meditation \(practice\)](#): Strengthen feelings of concern for the suffering of others.
- [36 Questions for Increasing Closeness \(practice\)](#): To feel more connected, skip the small talk and ask these questions instead.
- [Just One Thing: Relax Needless Fear Around Others \(article\)](#): Fear of COVID-19 can make us suspicious of each other. Follow Rick Hanson’s advice to stop seeing other people as threats.
- [Who Is Your Rock?](#) and [Is There Someone You Need to Thank? \(podcasts\)](#): As we help each other through these troubled times, what if we took the time to express more gratitude? Parkland survivor Kai Koerber and author Yuyi Morales share their experiences writing gratitude letters.

### Online Learning Tutorials

The State of California's Online Education Initiative (OEI) has developed an innovative set of interactive tutorials and tools, which may increase your chances of success in any online course. These tutorials are interactive, helpful, and easily accessible. To access these tutorials, click [here](#). The most helpful would be #1- 6 as well as the interactive tools to help determine computer readiness and to develop study schedules.

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## Academic Integrity



While we work through the challenges of switching to remote instruction/online learning, it's important to maintain the academic integrity this program requires.

## Tech Tools for Online Learning



There are a wide variety of tech tools currently being used in academics. I've created a list of the tools that you have access to through South College as well as included a few alternates.

- **Canvas:** [Getting Started as a Student](#)
- **Zoom:** [Zoom Video Tutorials](#)
- **Bongo:** [Bongo Knowledge Base](#)
- **Microsoft Office 365:** [Remote learning with Office 365 for students](#)
- **MS Teams:** [MS Teams Tutorials](#)
- **MS OneNote:** [A Beginner's Guide to MS OneNote](#)
- **MS Yammer:** [The New Yammer in Office 365](#)
- **Google Hangout Meet:** [Introducing the New Google Hangouts Meet](#)
- **Google Tools:** [G Suite Learning Center](#)
- **FaceTime:** [FaceTime: The ultimate guide](#)
- **Skype:** [Skye Help and Support](#)

## Who to Contact



Student Services support: <http://www.elcamino.edu/library/distance-ed/studentsupportandresources.aspx>

We have a twitter! [https://twitter.com/ode\\_elco](https://twitter.com/ode_elco)

Help desk information:

Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Saturday, Sundays, and Holidays:

Email Only

[Student Help Desk](#)

[Form](https://elcamino.formstack.com/forms/ode_online_help_form) ([https://elcamino.formstack.com/forms/ode\\_online\\_help\\_form](https://elcamino.formstack.com/forms/ode_online_help_form))

Email: [distanceed@elcamino.edu](mailto:distanceed@elcamino.edu)

Phone: (310) 660-6453

When filling out the form, emailing, or calling, please list the section/sections numbers along with your student ID number.

Section numbers are the 4 digits after the course number Phil -101- 4157 (section number is 4157).