

Dealing with Stress in Uncertain Times

In light of the current sociopolitical environment, our campus leadership has emphasized that our mission depends on keeping our doors open to the most talented students, scholars and staff—from across the United States and abroad. As the Office of the Provost website states, “We recruit and embrace the very best regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin.”

At the Counseling Center, we know our university is doing everything possible to ensure those who are at the university and those who wish to come to Illinois in the future will have access to the same opportunities they’ve had in the past. However, we also understand that for those affected, this is a very stressful time. This handout aims to provide our campus community with tips for protecting mental health during uncertain times.



If You Are Feeling Stress as an International Student/Scholar

- **Explore the specific thoughts that are causing you anxiety.** If you feel comfortable, talk with those who are close to you about your fears and frustrations. If your anxiety feels overwhelming, you may want to consider speaking with a mental health professional about strategies for managing what you’re feeling. The [Counseling Center](#) provides assistance for students, and the [Faculty Staff Assistance Program](#) is here for faculty and staff.
- **Prioritize self-care.** High levels of stress can make it more difficult to be well in general. When you’re experiencing a particularly stressful situation, it’s important to take care of yourself. Make sure that you’re getting enough sleep, exercising, eating well, and drinking plenty of fluids. Self-care also includes making time for things that bring you happiness and connecting with others who are supportive.
- **Limit media consumption.** It’s tempting to stay glued to the internet or television for the latest news, but in a 24-hour news cycle, the same information often is repeated. Hearing the same things on repeat serves little value and may actually cause more stress. Read just enough to stay informed and try to unplug from social media—especially from sources that may present information in a way that’s hurtful or biased.
- **Channel your concerns to make a positive difference.** Stress and anxiety about what might happen may not be productive. Consider volunteering in your community, advocating for rights, or joining a local group.



Counseling Center
counselingcenter.illinois.edu
217-333-3704

If You Are Concerned About a Friend/Colleague

- **Ask them what they need.** Some people may know right away what is most helpful, and some will not, but this is a good starting point. Asking this question communicates to the person that they are important to you, that they can be trusted to know what is best for themselves, and that you are willing to listen to them.
- **Don't be an instigator.** Not all spaces and times are appropriate for political dialogue. If someone feels anxious and unsafe, talking about the policies and opinions that are causing these feelings will likely make things worse. Aim to show compassion and move dialogue away from uncomfortable topics if you feel the discussion will not be productive.
- **Promote an overall sense of inclusion in your unit or department.** Ensuring an overall sense of inclusion and openness to diversity helps everyone feel they belong.

Campus Resources

Open Illinois

open.illinois.edu

International Student and Scholar Services

isss.illinois.edu

217-333-1303

Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations

oiir.illinois.edu

217-333-1300

Office for Student Conflict Resolution

conflictresolution.illinois.edu

217-333-3680

LaCasa Cultural Latina

oiir.illinois.edu/la-casa-cultural-latina

217-333-4950

Women's Resources Center

oiir.illinois.edu/womens-center

217-333-3137

Counseling Center

counselingcenter.illinois.edu

217-333-3704 (after hours crisis line: 217-359-4141)

McKinley Health Center Mental Health Unit

mckinley.illinois.edu/medical-services/mental-health

217-333-2701

Faculty Staff Assistance Program

fsap.illinois.edu

217-244-5312