



**Elgin Community College
Wellness Services**

The Breakdown ~ Stress: It's Not All Bad

Stress: It's Not All Bad

- Vinny Cascio: Welcome to The Breakdown with your wellness professionals here at Elgin Community College. I'm Vinny Cascio.
- Angela Ogburn: I'm Angela Ogburn. In this podcast, we're going to break down how to manage stress. But first, let's define stress. Stress is a perceived physical or mental demand that we put on ourselves. Key word: perceived.
- Vinny: There you go.
- Angela: Right. That doesn't necessarily mean it's real, but we're telling ourselves that the stress is real. This is a conditioned response; it's actually a survival mechanism.
- Vinny: Definitely. You know what, there's two different ways that we deal with this: fight or flight. In regards to fight, it's our way of fighting the stress and dealing with it. In regards to flight, sometimes we tend to avoid the situation completely, and that's our way of flight; it's our way of going away from it.
- Angela: Right, absolutely. This even has a historical reason. If you think back to during the cave man times, there are bears and tigers and scary things out there, so you needed to be able to fight back, or run away from it. So it had its place, but it doesn't necessarily have its place today. I don't know about your neighborhood, but I don't have any bears and tigers and things like that in mine.
- Vinny: Yeah I'm definitely good on that part.
- Together: [laughs]
- Angela: Also, there are some positive sides to stress. When you're a college student, it can be really positive that stress is motivating you. It can make you buckle down, it can make you say, "Wait a minute, I've got to get this stuff done - I can't procrastinate anymore." But, it also has some negative side effects.
- Vinny: Definitely. Unfortunately, stress can manifest itself through physical problems. It can really affect our sleeping patterns, it can affect our heart, even cause some heart problems and increase our blood pressure. As college students, when we're overly stressed and overwhelmed with things, it can actually impact our memory. That's really important because, hey, we have a lot of things to remember, we have a lot of things to process. So when we're overwhelmed with stress, it's not a good thing. We need to be able to be proactive in addressing these stressful situations.
- Angela: Right. Being proactive means that we're going to go ahead and take steps to prevent it from happening. So some of the foundational things that we can do



to manage our stress is to make sure that we're taking care of ourselves physically. I'm not advocating that someone spend 7 days a week 2 hours a day in a gym. I know that's not really an option when you're a college student, but getting some level of physical activity is important. Maybe if you're studying for an hour, you take a 5 minute break to go walk outside, get some fresh air, get a little bit of movement. Nutrition: huge – really, really important. We eat a lot of food-like stuff, but food has nutrition in it, so we need to make sure that we're eating food that has nutrients. The last one is sleep. I know college students feel like they can't go to sleep until they have all of their stuff done. They have another chapter to read, another homework assignment, more studying needs to be done. But, sacrificing sleep is a really bad idea and can make us feel really stressed out.

Vinny: Right. Let us not forget about surrounding ourselves with supportive people.

Angela: Yes.

Vinny: It's so important to have that one friend or good family member to really talk about things, and just to vent - talk about the stress that's going on in our lives and just have somebody to be that supportive system for you. Sometimes if it's overwhelming – that stress - it's very important that we talk to someone professional. You can always talk to us wellness professionals. We're here to talk to you about anything and everything.

Angela: That's right. So these are some great tools that you can start incorporating in your life, but we're just starting the conversation. For more tips, come check us out in Wellness Services. We're located in B120 and we're open for you Monday through Friday. Take care, you guys! I'm Angela Ogburn.

Vinny: I'm Vinny Cascio.

Together: And we're your wellness professionals.