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# Attention! Guide to Staying Focused and Completing Tasks

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# Overview

- Focus Facts and Info
- Taking Care of Myself=More Successful Outcomes
- Relaxation Practice
- Tips for Focusing
- Practice Prioritizing
- Wellness Resource Services
- Mental Health Services Available for All SCTCC Students
- Resources
- Questions

# Focus Facts and Info

# Why Do I Have a Hard Time Focusing?

- Feelings such as stressed, overwhelmed
- Distracted
- Lack of sleep
- Insufficient nutrition
- Environmental factors
  - Weather, activities/events
- Possibly a mental health issue

# Use of Cell Phones in Class...

- Splitting attention between lecture and cellphone or laptop use hinders long-term retention
- Students who were not using their cell phones while watching a video lecture
  - Wrote down 62% more information in their notes
  - Took more detailed notes
  - Were able to recall more information from the lecture
  - Scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple choice test than students who were actively using their cell phones

What Can I Do to  
Improve My Focus?

# Start with the Basics

Taking Care of Myself=  
More Successful Outcomes

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Managing Stress

# Sleep

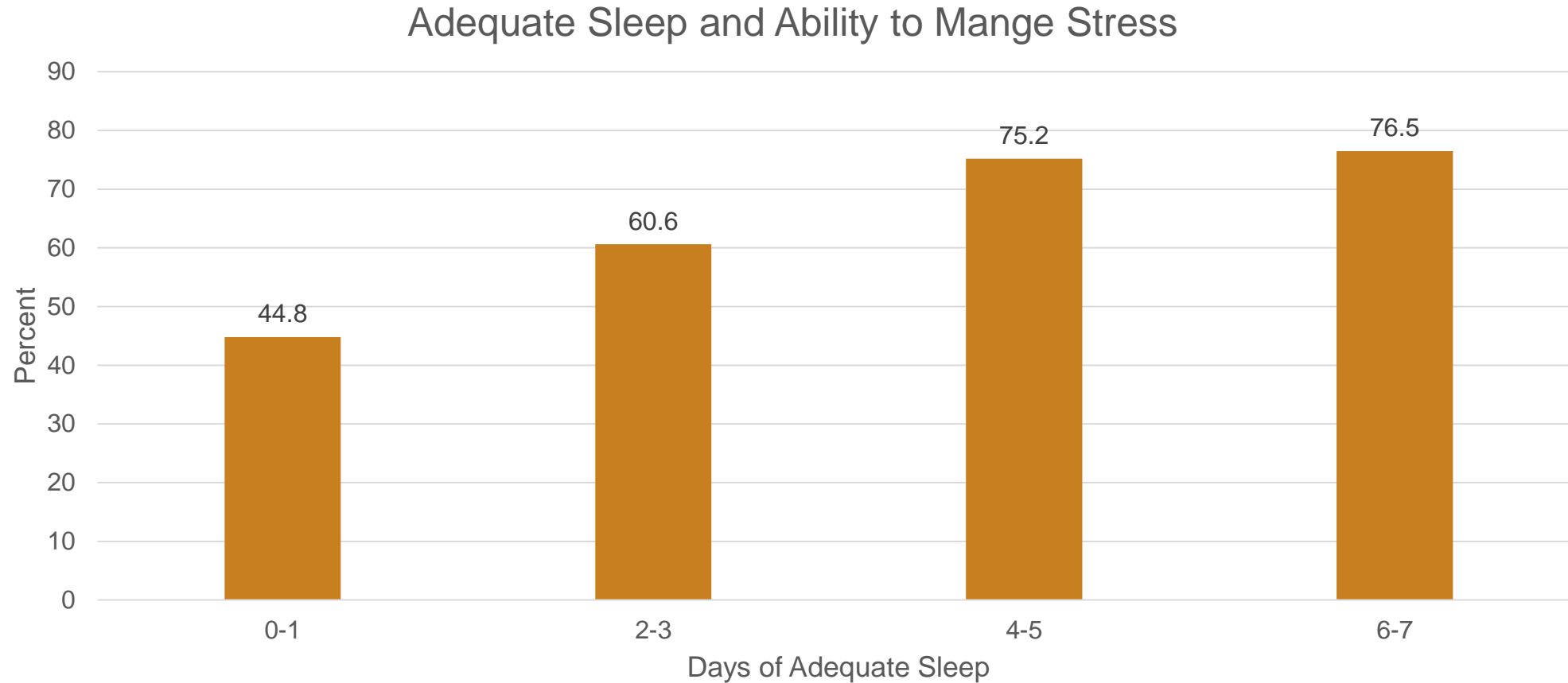


# Quality Sleep

- Skipping even a few hours can affect
  - Mood
  - Energy
  - Mental sharpness
  - Ability to handle stress



# How Does Sleep Affect Ability to Manage Stress?



# Tips for Getting Better Sleep

- Give your brain time to unwind at the end of the day
  - Turning off screens 2 hours before bedtime
  - Reduce mental stimulation prior to bedtime
- Stick to a regular sleep-wake schedule, even on weekends
- Set up your sleep environment
  - Dark
  - Cool
  - Quiet
- Practice a relaxation technique
  - Box breathing
  - Progressive muscle relaxation

# Nutrition



Add **HEALTHY**, wholesome foods to your diet.

**AVOID** processed foods, caffeine, and trans fats.



# Why Does it Matter What I Eat?

- What we eat, or don't eat can affect how we
  - Think
  - Feel
- An unhealthy diet can affect
  - Mood
  - Energy
  - Weaken immune system
  - Disrupt your sleep
- Eating a wholesome diet can
  - Give more energy
  - Improve sleep
  - Improve mood

# Foods that....

## Boost Mood

- Fatty fish rich in Omega-3s
  - Salmon, tuna, cod
- Nuts
  - Walnuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts
- Avocados
- Beans
- Leafy greens
  - Spinach, kale, Brussel's sprouts
- Fresh fruit

# Foods that...

## Adversely Affect Mood

- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Trans fats
- Food with high levels of chemical preservatives or hormones
- Sugary snacks
- Refined carbs
  - white rice, white flour
- Fried foods

# Managing Stress



# Stress Stats for Students

- Student reports of experiencing stressors in the last 12 months
  - 39.8% of students reported experiencing two or more significant stressors within the past 12 months
  - 23.4% reported experiencing three or more stressors over that same time period

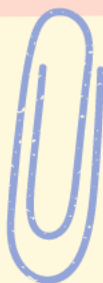
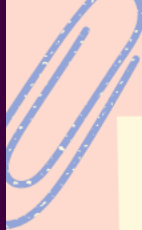
# Ways You Can Reduce Stress

- Identify and challenge negative thoughts
  - Glass half-full or half-empty?
- Reach out to family or friends
- Take a break and do something enjoyable/relaxing/fun
- Relaxation
- For more tips, check out the Tips and Tricks to Manage Stress presentation on our [website](#)

# Relaxation Practice

Manage your **STRESS**:

Take a break to practice a relaxation activity.



4-7-8

## Breathing Technique

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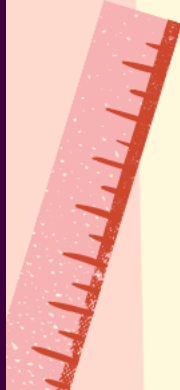
Close your mouth, inhale through your nose for 4 seconds

7

Hold your breath in for 7 seconds

8

Exhale completely through your mouth making a whoosh sound for 8 seconds



Repeat this cycle 4 times

# Focus Strategies and Tips

# Tips for Maintaining Focus and Completing Tasks

- Set realistic expectations
- Prioritize
- Make a schedule
  - Include breaks
  - Set timers if necessary
- Eliminate distractions (i.e., phone)
- Focus on 1 thing at a time
- Reward yourself
- Put your energy into what you can control

Practice!

How to Prioritize Tasks

1. Make a list of the things you need to complete
2. Prioritize which needs to happen 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.
  - write the number next to the item
3. Estimate how long each task will take
  - write that next to each item
4. Make a schedule
  - be realistic



# Additional Tips to Promote Success

- Use a planner
  - Schedule everything in
- Take good notes in class
- Make a study guide or flash cards
- Read and review
  - often and early
- Take advantage of tutoring at the CAS
- Organize your workspace

# ATTENTION!

## A GUIDE TO STAYING FOCUSED AND COMPLETING TASKS

### START WITH THE BASICS

Set up your **SLEEP** environment.

SLEEP FOR  
**7-9 HOURS**  
EVERY NIGHT



Add **HEALTHY**, wholesome foods to your diet.

**AVOID** processed foods, caffeine, and trans fats.



Manage your **STRESS**:

Take a break to practice a relaxation activity.

### 6 TIPS FOR MAINTAINING FOCUS & COMPLETING TASKS



**REDUCE** distractions.



Focus on **ONE** thing at a time.

**PRIORITIZE** your tasks.



Make a **SCHEDULE** and include breaks.



Set **TIMERS** to stay on track if necessary.



**ORGANIZE** your workspace.

### How To **PRIORITIZE** TASKS

**1.** Make a list of the things you need to complete.

**2.** Prioritize which needs to happen 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.  
- Write the number next to the item.

**3.** Estimate how long each task will take.  
- Write the time next to each item.

**4.** Make a schedule.  
- Be realistic.

A message from the  
Wellness Resource Services

# Other Supports for Students at SCTCC

- The CAS
  - Located in room 1-112, down the hall from the commons
  - [sctcc.edu/cas](http://sctcc.edu/cas)
- Accessibility Services

# Wellness Resource Services



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# Wellness Resource Services

- We are here to help support students dealing with a variety of life issues
  - Mental Health Services
  - Non-academic Student Support
- For more information, visit [www.sctcc.edu/wellness](http://www.sctcc.edu/wellness) or email us at [wellness@sctcc.edu](mailto:wellness@sctcc.edu)

# Mental Health Services

- Available for all current SCTCC students
- Free!
- Services include:
  - Short-term Counseling
  - Consultation
  - Referrals for Community Services
  - Crisis Intervention
- Many resources also available on our website
  - [www.sctcc.edu/mental-health-services](http://www.sctcc.edu/mental-health-services)

# How to Access Mental Health Services

- Students can request an appointment by completing a Mental Health Services Appointment Request (found on our website)
  - [https://webapps.sctcc.edu/mental\\_health/login.php](https://webapps.sctcc.edu/mental_health/login.php)
- Once submitted, someone from the Wellness Resource team will be in touch with you to discuss scheduling
- Walk-in appointments for consultation about services are available as time and scheduling allows
  - Please see Kim Wehlage in 1-401Q. Students can also contact Kim by phone at 320-308-5090 or email [kimberly.wehlage@sctcc.edu](mailto:kimberly.wehlage@sctcc.edu)

# Non- academic Student Support Services

- Available for all current SCTCC students
- Free!
- Examples of areas we can help:
  - Food
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Pregnancy, Parenting & Childcare
  - Financial Assistance
  - Relationship Concerns, Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
  - General Well-being & Success Support
- Many resources also available on our website
  - [www.sctcc.edu/wellness](http://www.sctcc.edu/wellness)





# Resources

- Suicide Prevention and Supports
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - 24-hour Local Crisis Hotline- 1-800-635-8008
  - 24-hour Crisis Text Line- Text HOME to 741741
- For additional Mental Health Resources, check out our website <https://www.sctcc.edu/mental-health-services>
  - Or search “Mental Health” from the main SCTCC web page

WE'RE ON INSTAGRAM!

**FOLLOW US**

Benefits  
Updates,  
Wellness  
Resources,  
& more!

Wellness  
Resource  
Services

ST. CLOUD  
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**@SCTCCWELLNESS**

# Questions



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