



## **Mental Health America of Franklin County**

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# **Boost Your School Performance**

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It can be hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle in college. If you are running to classes, studying, commuting to school and working or taking care of your family, time can seem to evaporate. If you are just starting college, the changes can feel overwhelming—and you may neglect your health.

Taking good care of your body and mind can make a difference in how well you do in school and how well you cope with change. Exercising, eating right, getting enough rest and relaxing will help you do better, enjoy school more and improve how you deal with the pressures. Caring for yourself may take a little extra time, but you will feel better and be more successful. Here's what you need and why it helps:

### **Regular exercise:**

- Elevates mood, reduces stress, increases energy level, improves appearance, and stimulates the release of endorphins and serotonin, which makes you happier.
- Increases alertness and creativity.
- Improves your overall mental and physical well-being. Even taking a 15-minute walk, 3 times a week, can help.
- Keeps you active and also creates more opportunities to meet new friends! Intramural sports provide a great opportunity for this.
- Decreases stress. On days when you are feeling overwhelmed, hit the gym.

### **A healthy diet:**

- Improves your ability to learn.
- Means eating a nutritious breakfast everyday. Skipping meals leads to a lack of energy.
- Includes eating something nutritious every time you are in the cafeteria. Try vegetables from the salad bar or an apple from the fruit stands.
- Means limiting your alcohol intake.
- Avoids excessive amounts of caffeine. Caffeine dehydrates you. Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day to prevent dehydration.

### **Plenty of rest:**

- Means getting at least seven to nine hours of sleep. This is essential and will make you more attentive and active. Inadequate sleep can lead to mood changes and lowered resistance to illness.
- Means you have more physical and psychological resources to cope with everyday life. Without it you have to work harder to get school assignments done and you have less energy.
- Is half the battle, the other half is cutting back on your alcohol consumption because it can disturb your sleep. Though you might fall asleep faster, your body will not be as rested.

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**Relaxation:**

- Means taking short study breaks, especially when you feel stuck.
- Means taking time each day to unwind, especially before sleeping. Listen to music, read or do whatever you enjoy. Alcohol or drugs are not the way to go.
- Offers a distraction from problems, a sense of competence and many other benefits.
- Means getting a good laugh. Laughing decreases pain, may help your heart and lungs, promotes muscle relaxation and can reduce anxiety.

Take care of your mind as well as your body. If you find that you are struggling emotionally or unable to cope, reach out to others for help. Seeking help is a sign of strength. Talk with someone you trust, and go to your college counseling service or doctor. Mental Health America of Franklin County can refer you to help as well. Call 614-221-1441 or visit [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org) for help.

**Mental Health America of Franklin County** is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We help people navigate the mental health system. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; free support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; Pro Bono Counseling Program where underinsured and uninsured individuals can receive free counseling; community and professional mental health education including Get Connected; and a quarterly newsletter featuring legislative updates and new happenings at MHAFC. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board and United Way of Central Ohio. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org).