

WELLNESS TIPS

MANAGING DECREASED MOTIVATION

We all have experienced times when our motivation has tanked. We don't want to work on what we "should" be doing. Causes for decreased motivation may be straightforward, such as feeling exhausted by the end of the semester, lack of interest, or having agreed to work on a project that you don't really want to do. There are steps you can take to not be derailed by decreased motivation and to increase your sense of motivation.

Addressing physical health is important.

- Eating regular meals provides glucose to your brain so you can think clearly. Don't skip meals!
- Regular sleep routine helps your energy level.

If past experiences have included excessive criticism or undue pressure to perform, those experiences can be incorporated into one's self-communication with self-critical and castigating thoughts which are counterproductive and decrease motivation, rather than enhance it.

- Try to become aware of your negative, critical self-talk.
- Practice replacing these thoughts with supportive, encouraging comments. Think about what you would say to a friend.
- Give yourself credit for small things you do – don't discount them.

Feeling overwhelmed can contribute to decreased motivation. Having too many decisions to make (even small ones) or too many tasks to complete is exhausting. You can free up space in your brain by:

- Making a written (or in an app) list of activities and commitments and create a schedule. This will provide visual feedback about your plan and your time commitments. The list should include everything: work/school, chores, meals, leisure, social, exercise, breaks, sleep.
- Breaking things down into manageable chunks.

If there are unpleasant tasks to accomplish:

- Visualize what it will look like when it is completed or that portion is completed and what you will feel like.

- Do it earlier in the day. You will have more energy to address the task. It is less likely to be shunted aside by other things that come up and it will be done, rather than being added to the list for tomorrow.

Remind yourself why you want to do this project - why it's important.

- What is your goal?
- How does this project or task fit into your goals?

Create an environment that supports your efforts.

- Minimize distractions
- Organize your work area to decrease clutter
- Engage with others, use videos or audios that are energizing and enhance your motivation.

Decreased motivation can be an on-going, chronic problem that is more complex than an occasional occurrence. It can also be a sign of other problems, such as depression or anxiety. Seeking assistance can be helpful in assessing possible contributing factors and how they might be addressed.

Bundrant, Mike. "Lack of Motivation? Here are Seven Causes and Seven Cures." Neuro-Linguistic Programming Center.

<https://inlpcenter.org/lack-of-motivation-here-are-seven-causes-and-seven-cures/>

Lim, Shawn. "Motivation? 7 Great Ways to Overcome Loss of Motivation." Lifehack. 4/22/2020.

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/7-great-ways-how-overcome-loss-motivation.html>

Mental Health Foundation. "What Advice Would You Give to Someone Lacking in Motivation?" November 21, 2016.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/what-advice-would-you-give-someone-lacking-motivation>

Check the MSCC Website for other Wellness Tips, including “Developing Healthy Habits”.
<https://medicine.uiowa.edu/md/student-support/student-counseling/mscc-wellness-programs-and-resources>

Feel free to contact the MSCC for questions or concerns or to schedule an appointment with one of our counselors.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

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