

**Grad School
Burnout & Mental
Health Resources**

Balancing work/life stress

- Make time for a hobby
 - Exercise or other activities
- Try to have work/life boundaries
 - Make time for others in your life
- Have a note of where your mind was when leaving lab for next day
- Plan fun activities far in advance
- Set up hours for work/fun

Maintaining motivation

- Regular planning meeting with PI
- Try to manage burnout to keep the motivation high
- Keep your sight on longer term goals to maintain that motivation
- Get organized
- Celebrate victories (even the small ones)
- Think of the bigger picture (why are you here?)
- Think about the future \$\$\$\$

The “grueling sameness”

- Take a “brain break”
- Front-load the repetitive tasks get things out of the way
- Have an external stimulus (music/podcast)
- Work on side projects (collaborators, cross training, etc.)

Find something new to do

- Go to therapy
 - Dealing with grad school stress isn't always taught so get help
- Get back to getting out and doing things
 - Hiking, gym, go to lunch/dinner with friends
 - Plan activities with others
- Axe throwing
 - Not in lab please
- Video games!!

UMB Mental Health Resources

<https://www.umaryland.edu/counseling/>

- Services currently using telehealth
- Can set up regular meeting with initial intake call (waiting period)
- Can use regular services for ~year then will be transitioned externally
- Can request same-day short (~15 min) tele-talk meeting

<https://www.umaryland.edu/counseling/lets-tele-talk/>

UMBC Mental Health Resources

<https://health.umbc.edu/counseling-services/counseling/>

- Single session, regular individual, couples/relationship therapy options
- Group therapy sessions (meet across semester, themed topics)
- "Mind Spa" for mindfulness, meditation, relaxation
- Dedicated self-help resources
- Part-time psychiatrist
- Acupuncture/massage (covered by student health plan with \$20 copay)



Managing Stress in Grad School

University Counseling Services

UMBC

<https://health.umbc.edu/>

UMB

<https://www.umaryland.edu/counseling/>

After Hours: 410-455-3230

UMBC Police: 410-455-5555

911

SCC Operational Changes

Due to the [UMB Policies and Guidance Regarding COVID-19](#), the Student Counseling Center is offering tele-mental health services to UMB students. Please review the operational changes for more information. If you are experiencing a crisis and need immediate assistance, please call us at **410-328-8404**. If it is outside business hours, please use our Crisis Support Service at **410-328-8404, option 7**.

[Click here for more information about operational changes.](#)

Location

The Center for Well-Being

Hours

Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Contact

☎ Phone: **410-455-2542**

Stress in Grad School



THESIS
RESEARCH



PRESENTATIONS



PUBLICATIONS



TEACHING



TRAINING



WORK/LIFE
BALANCE



NETWORKING

These questions are for you to quietly ask yourself

Answer “agree” or “disagree” to the following statements.

1. School often feels overwhelming, but lately, so does life in general.
2. My sleeping habits have changed – I’m sleeping too much, or I’m not sleeping enough.
3. I’ve lost interest in doing things I used to enjoy. It’s safe to say I sometimes feel empty.
4. Sometimes I feel like a fraud. I keep waiting for everyone else to see how worthless I am.
5. I worry so much that sometimes those worries take over my life.
6. Friends and family have noticed concerning changes in me.
7. Self-doubt has been overwhelming me since I started grad school.
8. Sometimes I’m on a “high” and can’t slow down; other times I’m so depressed that I don’t want to get out of bed.
9. I turn to alcohol or drugs more and more often these days.
10. I find myself staying up way too late to work on assignments and then worrying that I didn’t spend enough time on them.

Recognizing Negative Stress

Feelings

Anxiety

Fear

Irritability

Behavior

Increased drug/alcohol use

Loss of appetite or overeating

Acting impulsively

Academics

Concentration/memory/problem solving difficulties

Thoughts

low self-esteem

Fear of failure

Signs of Imposter Syndrome



Afraid of being outed as a fraud



Feeling unworthy of success



Dismissing positive feedback



Distrusting of others



Overpreparing



Blaming accomplishments on luck



Types of Imposter Syndrome



SUPERHERO:
overwork themselves to make up
for how inadequate they feel



NATURAL GENIUS:
set exceedingly high goals, feel
crushed when they don't meet them



EXPERT:
never satisfied with their level of
understanding, always trying to
learn more



PERFECTIONIST:
never completely happy with their work,
fixated on flaws instead of strengths



SOLOIST:
prefer to work alone, won't ask for help for
fear of appearing weak or incompetent

Strategies to combat Imposter Syndrome and Fight Negative Stress

Over time, our work will validate we are not imposters

Imposter syndrome is something that can be present at all stages of life/career

Still, there are difficult times we experience through grad school

Being humble and suffering Imposter Syndrome are different things

One is an acknowledgement of others, the other is a rejection of self

Take time periodically to recollect all you have accomplished within the past month/semester/year

Doing graduate research during the COVID pandemic is not trivial!

The pandemic (especially early on, but still from time to time) has effected the pace of research

Taking care of your physical well-being is linked to your mental well-being

Exercise

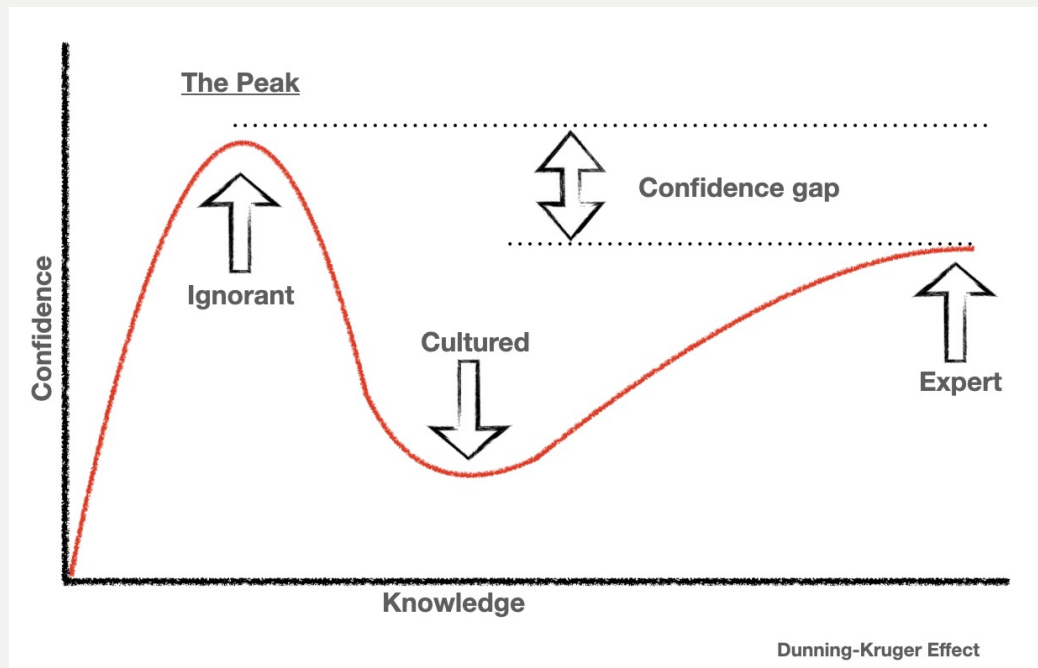
Hydration/nutrition

Rest

Celebrating small victories in work

Making small goals to make large projects easier to process

Dunning-Kruger Effect



Exercise

Sit up straight

Close your eyes, if you wish

Take inventory of all your thoughts and feelings

Let the tension leave your face/shoulders

Just focus on your breathing

If your mind starts to wander, redirect yourself onto the focus of breathing

Focus on the aspects of breathing, the one point that feels tightest in breathing

Expand focus again to consider your posture, your facial expressions, and your awareness of your whole body

We'll set a timer for 3 minutes and let you take this time to focus

Stress Management Exercises

Practice deep, slow breathing for 10-20 minutes

Visualize your favorite place & picture it in detail

Sit quietly with eyes closed or open

Try not to dwell on distracting thoughts during this time

Referenes

<https://gsm.ucdavis.edu/blog/5-tips-grad-school-stress>

<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/health-topic/stress>

<https://toxchange.toxicology.org/blogs/julie-griffith/2021/12/09/graduate-school-stress-and-stress-management>

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<https://medium.com/geekculture/dunning-kruger-effect-and-journey-of-a-software-engineer-a35f2ff18f1a>

<http://mindhealthtoronto.com/the-3-minute-breathing-space/#:~:text=The%203%20Minute%20Breathing%20Space%20is%20a%20mini%20meditation%20for,downward%20spiral%20of%20emotional%20reactivity.>