

# The Wellness Connection

Cardinal Stritch University Counseling Center

## WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE

People are social beings who thrive best in community. Reaching out and sharing our lives with others brings support, joy, and meaning to our days. But in this time of instant and constant contact, and a million diversions just a click away, choosing how, and how often, we connect is key. While connecting through texts, Facebook, twitter and blogs can bring us closer to those far away, they also take us away from where we actually stand at the moment.

Have you ever walked to class with a friend and an-

swered a phone call? Instantly, you are transported away from where your feet are taking you, from the sensory world around you, and you are flung to the location of the person with whom you are on the phone. Activities, cares, concerns and history crowd in among the present.

Connection is essential, but cluttered inboxes and continual chat can exhaust us. No longer do they support; instead, they distract and take away from more meaningful connection with those who are actually present, with the world, with ourselves.



It is our hope that throughout your time at Stritch, you take the time to reflect and gain insight on the ways you connect and where you focus your time and attention. As you read, consider what changes would help you improve your work or studies, or create more meaningful relationships. Read on for ideas to help create balance in your life.

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the Counseling Center's newsletter. In this issue, learn more about creating life balance, time management, stress relief, living with roommates and more! So, browse the articles. If you have questions, ideas for

future articles, or would like to stop in and see us, send an email or give us a call. We look forward to hearing from you. Our contact information is on page 4.

Wishing you a successful semester,

The Wellness Center

# TIME MANAGEMENT

## WATCH OUT FOR THE TIME WASTERS



They are everywhere: in your room, on the laptop you carry and the phone you answer. They are those masters of distraction - the time wasters.

Relaxation and down time are essential for regaining energy, connecting with friends and family and simply enjoying life. But time wasters, while seeming to accomplish these goals, often sap energy and connection.

How do you know a time waster ?

- It makes you feel busy but adds little to life
- It often feels relaxing at first, but eventually causes tiredness and boredom
- It gets in the way of more meaningful experience

Other time wasters include habits that get in the way of success including lack of planning, overcommitting and haste.

Take the following [How good is your time management](#) quiz at [mindtools.com](#) to learn more about your time management strengths and opportunity areas.

How to beat the time wasters:

- Know and prioritize your goals
- Build your schedule around your commitments
- Use a calendar and your syllabi to fill out the whole semester of school work
- Have a consistent study time and location
- Study as soon after class as possible while it is fresh in your mind
- Do it right, and completely, the first time
- Check email, texts and Facebook at fixed times, not constantly
- Reward good behavior-when you avoid a time waster, celebrate (but not by wasting time!)



## BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT: WHEN COMPUTER USE IS AN ADDICTION

*"I go on Facebook to feel connected, but actually feel less connected than ever."*

*"I don't text much—just a few hundred messages a day."*

*"Honestly, I spend about 6 hours a day online checking out Facebook and iTunes. Reading my text books? Well, I try to fit that in."*

*"I feel compelled to answer every text. Immediately."*

Ease of access to information and instant gratification can combine to create addictive use of technology. Behavior science has found that unpredictable rewards are the most reinforcing. This is why gambling can become an issue: while constantly losing bets may cause people to quit, constant winning would become boring (really!). Sporadic wins, however, create a strong biological desire to try again.

Video gaming and the internet

create a similar reward system. In fact, sites like *Tumblr* and *StumbleUpon* have a payoff that is identical to that of gambling—sometimes you stumble upon something really fabulous, often not, but the hope lingers, and calls to you, to try again.

Addiction to pornography is also an increasing issue as ease of access is combined with the ability to remain anonymous.

Many people turn to the Internet in order to manage unpleasant feelings. It can be a quick way to relieve stress or escape from thoughts. But, compulsive use of technology can lead to isolation, irritability, depression, neglected relationships and difficulty succeeding at work and school.

How do you know when your usage is addictive?

Answer the [netaddiction.com](#) survey below:

1. Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (think about previous online activity or anticipate next online session)?
2. Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
3. Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?
4. Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?
5. Do you stay online longer than originally intended?
6. Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?

7. Have you lied to family members or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?
8. Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression?

Answering "yes" to five or more questions may mean you suffer from Internet addiction.

For more information, [helpguide.org/internet-addiction](#) has self-help strategies to assist in changing thoughts that contribute to addictive behavior and help replace compulsive behavior with healthy options. Or, make an appointment with the Counseling Center to talk over your experience or concerns and begin to move toward positive change.

## Life on the Beam

Picture yourself on a balance beam. You are walking across that slim slice of wood. What is your goal? Did you say, “to get to the other end?” Or, “to stay in balance?” Consider how each answer changes the way you cross the beam. The person whose goal is the other end could be wobbling and tipy and stressed and still claim, “success.” Has life felt like that? The second walker is just as likely (and maybe more likely) to reach the other end. With the goal being a balanced journey, they may enlist support along the way, and focus on breathing, sensing their steadiness, and staying calm to maintain balance. How you prioritize balance in your life will have strong impact on whether you achieve it.

It can also significantly impact your ability to achieve other goals and to enjoy the journey.

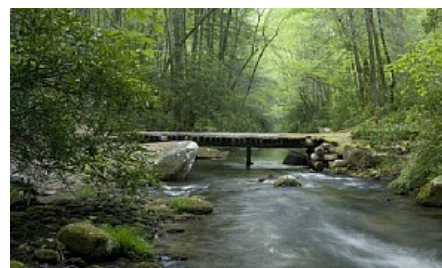
For this week, consider having your goal be, “staying in balance.” Enlist a friend to join you. At the end of the week, compare your productivity and how you feel with prior weeks this semester. Note your stress level. Consider changes you may want to make.

To create more balance, here are three tips to get you started:

- Plan ahead. How many distractions would it take for even the best gymnast to waver? Stay focused on what is important to you.

- Identify where you hold stress. Shoulders and stomach are places people often hold stress. Notice the tension, and then consciously breathe calm into these places.
- Practice mindfulness, or being fully present, to what your senses notice.

Enjoy the journey!



## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

**Question:** I am feeling really stressed. I have felt anxious in the past, but it is increasing, and I have had several panic attacks in the last year. Do you have any suggestions?

**Answer:** Anxiety is a warning sign that we feel threatened. Sometimes the threat is real and present, and anxiety serves its useful purpose of preparing us for action. Actors and others recognize a certain level of anxiety is actually useful as it heightens focus. At other times, anxiety is less useful. A memory, event, sight or touch triggers past remembrances or hurls us toward anticipating future harm.

Letting go of less useful anxiety can be done by learning mindfulness, breathing techniques, and stepping out of your comfort zones in safe ways.

Anxiety is frequently about remembering the past and anticipating the future. Staying fully present does not give it a “home.” Right now— focus on the chair you sit in, the temperature in the room, the texture of the chair covering, the hardness of the floor. Take a calm, cleansing breath. Be present to the information from your senses. Feel your anxiety drift away... Practice mindfulness, or being fully present, in all you do.

Another way to reduce anxiety is to practice stepping out of your comfort zone. Anxiety has a habit of shrinking life: as you find more ways to avoid anxiety, you reduce the opportunity for meaningful interactions. You need to take back your life from anxiety’s control. Challenge yourself to low to mid-level anxiety-producing situations first. Use mindfulness, calm breathing and other coping strategies to manage your anxiety. Congratulate yourself for every attempt, because even the attempt is facing a challenge. As you accomplish one challenge, go on to the next.

For additional help, consider counseling, where you can confidentially discuss your concerns.

## ROOMMATE 101: GUIDELINES FOR A GREAT YEAR

Chances are that sometime in your college life you will be living with a roommate. Whether on-campus or off, living with a roommate will go more smoothly by setting some rules and boundaries. To create a positive experience with your roommate:

### Establish Rules Early

Talk about your preferences from the start. Do you like music at all times or do you prefer silence

when you study? How often do you want guests? What time do you go to sleep? Setting clear rules can help to avoid or resolve any issues that arise.

### Communicate

Learn to be assertive in your communication. State your concern in a respectful way. Try not to blame or criticize, but rather to uncover and resolve feelings on both sides. Be sure to share posi-

tive feedback as well.

### Compromise

From chores and schedules, to neatness and use of space, you both will have different likes and dislikes. Compromise means two people agreeing on a resolution. It does not mean giving in or dominating the situation. Learning to blend your lifestyles will create a comfortable living situation and

teach you interpersonal skills that will last a lifetime.

While the above guidelines may not solve every issue, they will go a long way toward creating goodwill. Even if you never become best friends, respect, communication and compromise will help create a warm, welcoming home-away-from-home.

## Cardinal Stritch University Counseling Center

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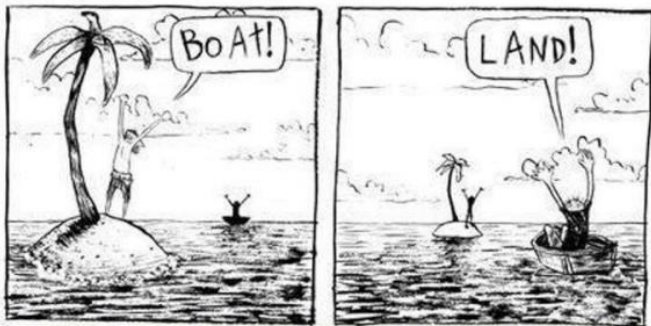
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*Counseling is available Monday through Friday including some evening hours.  
Appointments may be made by calling 414.410.4097 or calling or emailing staff directly*

*The Counseling Center promotes the mental health and well-being of Cardinal Stritch University students by offering free, confidential counseling by experienced therapists. Short term counseling and longer term psychotherapy are available as appropriate. Referrals to other mental health facilities are made at the request of the student or to meet needs beyond the scope of Cardinal Stritch University's Counseling Center.*

*For a safe, confidential place to talk over feelings and needs, mental health and other personal issues, gain self awareness and self confidence, work on recovery issues, deal with interpersonal relations or life stressors or develop positive coping skills, come see us.*

## JUST A THOUGHT



Perspective...

Image source: [Εσύ που ήσουν](#) [Facebook]

### Choose Your View

A slight breeze wafts in  
Slanted sunlight scattering  
Leaf shadows on the wall

Hum, ping, click and tap  
Email, *Tumblr*, *Tweet*, and Text  
We *StumbleUpon*

Life goes on  
And wherever you go-  
There you are



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