The following actions have been shown to positively impact mental well-being and help you thrive. Try them yourself, or share them with others.

**Gratitude**

Gratitude is about noticing, acknowledging and appreciating the good things in our lives.

1. Before you go to sleep, think of three things you’re grateful for in your life (these don’t need to be big things, they can be as simple as being grateful for a warm cup of coffee).
2. Start a gratitude group with friends and family. Each week message each other one thing you’re grateful for.
3. Start a gratitude journal. Every few days, you take a moment to make note of three things you are grateful for.

**Acts of kindness**

Research shows that through doing acts of kindness, we can enhance our own well-being as well as others’.

1. Reach out to a friend, colleague, teacher or family member to express your thanks and appreciation.
2. Do a random act of kindness (such as giving up your seat on the bus, buying a stranger a coffee or holding the door for someone).
3. Try volunteering for an organization that contributes to a cause you believe in.

**Self-compassion**

Self-compassion is about giving ourselves the same kindness that we would give to a friend or loved one.

1. Be kind to yourself, by taking time for something you love or reminding yourself of the positive things you’ve accomplished.
2. Create a mantra a self-compassion mantra such as “May I be kind to myself in this moment” or “May I accept myself completely as I am”, and repeat this to yourself when you notice you are being hard on yourself.
3. Take a moment to think about how you would approach a friend or loved one if they were struggling and treat yourself with the same kindness.

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment.

1. Try one of the guided mindfulness sessions available here, or download the pp: Stop, Breath, Think.
2. Take 5 deep breaths in and out, and try to keep your mind focused on only the feeling of your breath.
3. Take 5 minutes to imagine or remember a place where you feel happy, calm and at peace. When you find yourself feeling stressed, try to take 2 minutes to imagine yourself there.
4. Make eating, walking or other activities mindful activities by focusing your mind fully on experiencing the activity while you do it. If your mind wanders, gently remind yourself to focus back on the activity.
Staying connected

Social connections are one of the most important ways you can boost your mental well-being, whether it’s reaching out to connect with someone new, or reconnecting with friends and family.

1. Take 20 min to call a friend or family member to connect
2. Join a new club or activity and make a point of introducing yourself to someone new
3. When working on a class discussion or project, be intentional about fostering positive interactions and getting to know each other as people – not just work partners.
4. Plan an afternoon to disconnect from work and assignments and focus on spending quality time with friends and family.

Taking in the good

Is about taking in and experiencing positive experiences.

1. Next time you have a positive experience, take the time to really enjoy it. This could be something as small as enjoying a warm beverage, but really let yourself notice and enjoy the experience for a few moments.
2. Create a bliss list of things that make you feel happy inside. Try to experience as many of these as possible in the next week.

Physical activity

Physical activity boosts your mood and helps maintain positive mental well-being. Even a short activity break or walk can help.

1. While studying, take a short walk break every hour or two to help keep you energized, focused and feeling your best.
2. Plan to do something active you enjoy at least once this week (3 times a week is better). This could be a sport, bike ride or a brisk walk with a friend.
3. Make use of the great recreation facilities and programs offered at SFU, including FitMix (free weekly fitness class), free yoga and other Recreation Programs.

Reframe Failure

Failure is part of life. By shifting your perspective and remembering that failure can be an opportunity for growth, you can improve your mental well-being.

1. Next time you experience a failure or a set-back, try to remember that it is a normal experience and is an opportunity for growth and development.
2. Treat yourself the way you would treat someone you care for, with kindness and support.
3. Take SFU’s free online Bouncing Back Resilience course on canvas to learn more strategies for enhancing your resilience and well-being.

This project is an initiative of SFU Health & Counselling Services, delivered by the SFU Health Peers.
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References


