Stress Management Tips

**Time management:** Many times when we feel overwhelmed with the amount of things we have to do, we can start to panic and feel like the mountain is too high to climb. This could lead to giving up or shutting down. What can we do to feel less overwhelmed?

- Make a to-do list
- Prioritize your to-do list into today, this week, this month
- Take it one day at a time and accomplish today’s tasks
- Create a schedule with time to study, read, and complete assignments
- Stick to the daily/weekly routine you decide on, there is comfort and confidence in this
- Stay organized
- Figure out how to study most effectively, where you can study most time efficiently (without interruptions, maybe...), and when you are able to think and absorb the most (night owl, early bird, days off, when the kids are away, etc.).

**Self-care:** Nurses are notorious for taking care of everyone else and leaving themselves for last. Remember, you can’t pour from an empty cup! Taking time for yourself to rejuvenate and recharge is paramount to your success in this program.

- Take long, slow, deep breaths often
- Turn off your mind occasionally. Let yourself take a vacation from thinking every now and again by meditating, vegging out in a game, taking a mindful walk, etc. This is especially helpful when you’re worrying a lot.
- Journal, vent, talk it out when you need to, then let it go. Then move on instead of letting it build up or continuing to focus on it/harp on it.
- Eat healthily, get enough sleep, get in some movement (movement doesn’t have to be hour long exercise bouts daily, multitask by taking that mindful walk or reading while on a treadmill if you can concentrate that way)

**Managing the actual stress:** Stress is normal and to be expected in an MSN program! Making sure that you are taking the time to manage your stress each day will keep it at a level that you can handle, which is important so that stress doesn’t build up to the point of boiling over. Everyone is different and there are many options below so you can see what will work for you.

- Relaxation techniques such as deep belly breathing, stretching/yoga, visualization of something calming to you/your happy place, being present (we don’t spend much of our life in the present but in looking forward and making plans or looking back)
- Laugh!
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Reach out to your social network, support system, support group of peers
- Guided meditation (there are apps for this!)
- Decompress (when we are stressed or working for hours on end we notice our shoulders to start to creep higher and higher up towards our ears... that’s tension/stress. Physically help this by placing a warm compress on your shoulders to ease that away and it will help your mental stress too!)