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We have all had the feeling before, our muscles are tense, our stomach is upset, we cant sleep or eat; thought some of us may eat too much. You may feel sad or depressed and when you try to think of a way to fix your problems you go blank. This is because you are stressed.

Medicinenet. com define stress as a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external( from the environment, psychological, or social situation) or internal( illness, or from a medical procedure). I think all of us can relate to stress, especially since we are all college students here at Monroe College. But as individuals, we are faced with all different types of stress. Stress is constant in our lives and simply cannot be avoided but needs to be properly managed.

There are two types of stress, we have acute stress and chronic stress. Acute stress is the type that comes immediately with a change of routine. It is an intense type of stress, but it passes quickly. Some of the effects a person may have are chest pain, abdominal discomfort, headaches, difficulty in concentrating, sleeplessness and depletion of energy.

While chronic stress is the response to emotional pressure suffered for a prolonged period over which an individual perceives he or she has no control. Some of the effects of chronic stress are headaches, mood swings, anxiety disorder, substance abuse, memory disturbances and in severe cases a heart attack due to high blood pressure. Why is college life so stressful? Just one of the questions you may have ask yourself. While some of us prefer to focus on social objectives in school, the reality is that majority of college students usually feel academic pressure from one or more people. Parents often expect students to achieve certain academic goals, whether those include making the dean’s list or graduating on time. Professors, staff and peers at school may also push students to work hard in school. In many cases, more ambitious students face self-inflicted pressure to get good grades, graduate and get a great job. Coherently, us college students often find a number of new social experiences and relationships during their first several weeks of school.

Romantic relationships can escalate in significance, also increasing the potential for hurt feelings, excessive worrying and heartache. Peer relationships can be a source of support for college students. However, we must be cautious about the types of close friends we gather. Friendships with constant party-goers who engage in illegal drinking or drugs and who have no ambition for school can lead students down a stressful path. Lastly, the more responsibility and accountability a person takes on, the more stress he feels to perform. For many college students, gaining some level of independence can lead to greater accountability, and subsequently, stress. The freedom to make choices and get out from under parental control is appealing to many first-year students. When dishes need to be washed, food cooked, bills paid, rooms cleaned and problems resolved, the reality of what independence really means contributes to the stress of being a college student. How to manage our stress? I came up with an acronym to help us remember, RELEASE. R stands for Recognize.

First we have to recognize the problem and acknowledge that it is there. E stands for Exercise. Everyday try and set aside time to exercise. Excersing is a good way to release the excess energy. L stands for Let it Go. Whatever that is causing you to stress will not matter a month from now or a year from now so just let it go. E Eat Healthy. A well nourished body is better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. A stands for Attitude. having a good positive attitude can go a long way. Be able to have a sense of humor and laugh at yourself. S Sleep. Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally. Lastly, E Enjoy Life. Pamper yourself, take time during your day just to have a cup of tea and do what you truly enjoy. In closing, we cannot ignore that we have stress in our lives. Rather than ignoring it, we need to find ways of dealing with it. I hope you take from my speech some useful tips on how to manage your stress so that you can live a happier more enjoyable life. And remember, don’t take life too seriously; nobody ever makes it out alive anyway.