

www.studenthealth101.com

# STUDENT health101™

ACTIVELY PROMOTING CAMPUS HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Vol. 2, Issue 6 | March 2007

## STRESSED OUT?

Strategies for surviving hard times

## Body Art Basics

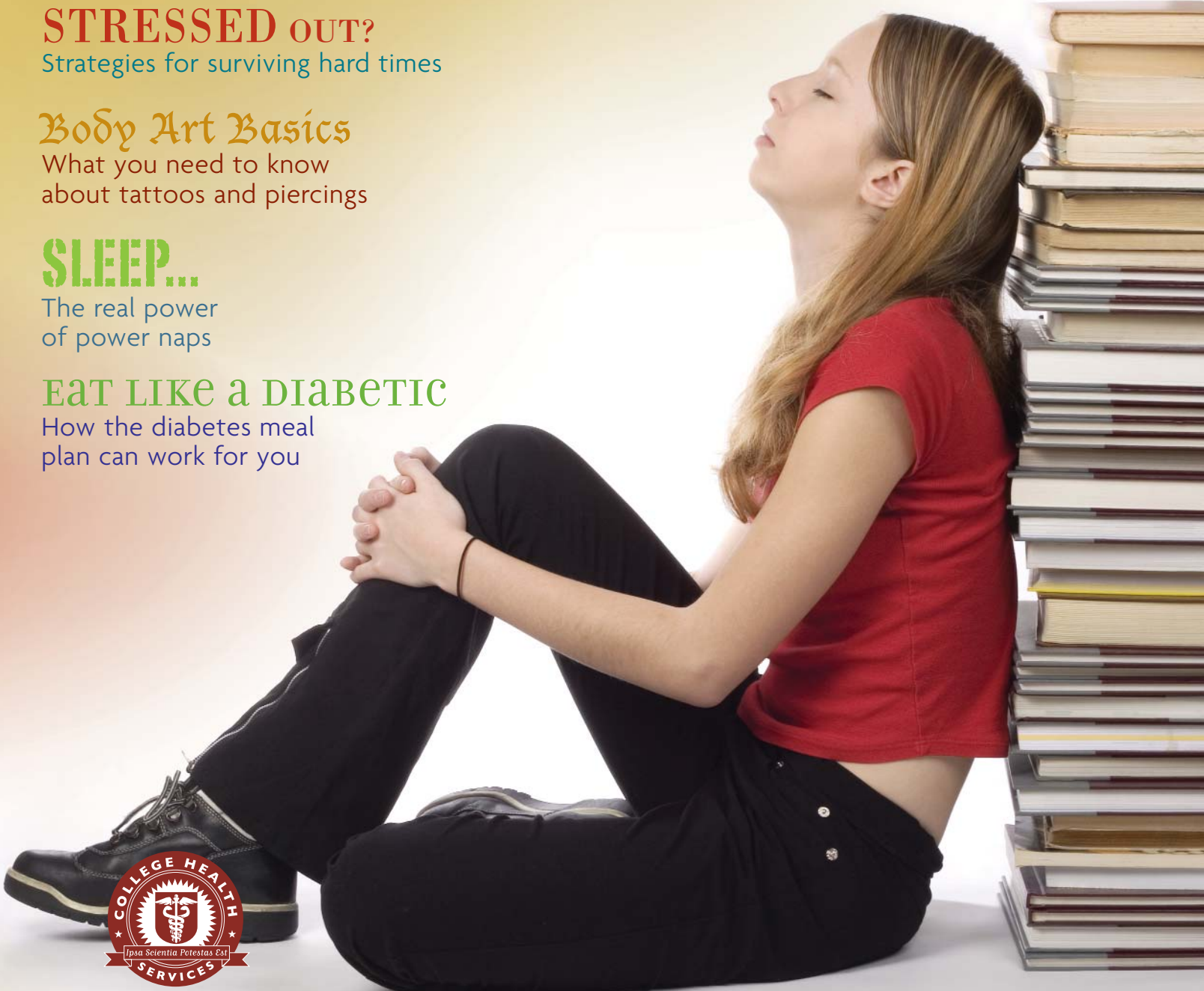
What you need to know  
about tattoos and piercings

## SLEEP...

The real power  
of power naps

## EAT LIKE a DIABETIC

How the diabetes meal  
plan can work for you





# 5

> BY MARIA PASCUCCI

# Ways to PERSEVERE When LIFE Collides with YOUR Studies

**E**ver heard the saying, “College students don’t have lives?” Well, college students can assure you that they do have lives. The tricky part is juggling life’s responsibilities and balancing them with fun and relaxation. Between school, friends, relationships, family, work, internships, extracurricular commitments ... stressed yet?

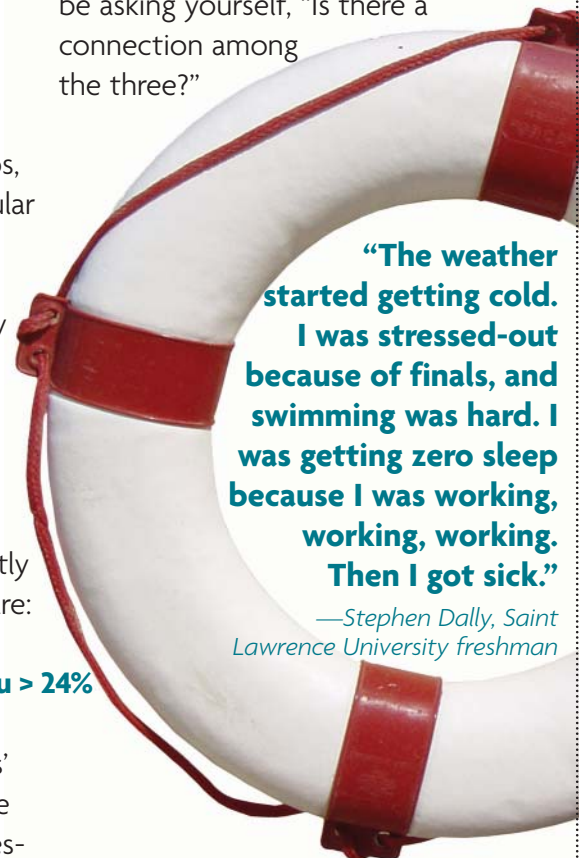
by students as impediments to academic performance, you may be asking yourself, “Is there a connection among the three?”

Unfortunately, life can get in the way of your studies from time to time. According to the American College Health Association’s (ACHA) 2005 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) of college students, the top three factors that students say directly affect their academic performance are:

**Stress > 31% | Sleep > 24% | Colds/Flu > 24%**

Other life issues that affect students’ test scores and course grades include relationship/family difficulties, depression and anxiety, and even Internet use/computer games.

If stress, sleep difficulties, and colds/flu were the top answers given



**“The weather started getting cold. I was stressed-out because of finals, and swimming was hard. I was getting zero sleep because I was working, working, working. Then I got sick.”**

—Stephen Dally, Saint Lawrence University freshman

Absolutely, said Dr. Christine Moll, Associate Professor of Counseling & Human Services at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York.

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## > Features

### IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- 5 Ways to Persevere When Life Collides with Your Studies . . . . . 2**
- Pins and Needles: The Risks and Rewards of Body Art . . . . . 4**
- Advice for Everyone: Eat Like a Diabetic . . . . . 7**
- Nap Man Helps Drowsy Students at the University of Colorado at Boulder . . . 10**

### IN EVERY ISSUE . . .

- FROM THE DOC’S DESK . . . . . 2**
- STUDENT VOICES . . . . . 4**
- TAKE NOTE . . . . . 7**
- NEWS . . . . . 10**
- HEALTH BRIEFS . . . . . 16**
- GLAD YOU ASKED . . . . . 18**



Our feature story in this issue addresses a very real topic: what happens when life affects your studies. Everyone has to balance academic demands with family obligations, work, personal relationships, and even fun. Part of the college experience is learning how to make all those pieces fit together without getting burned out.

But sometimes illness, a relationship problem, concern for a friend who's having problems, a death in the family, depression, or anxiety—any number of serious issues—can get in the

way of your studies. Maybe you had to miss class for a week or more. Or maybe your body has made it to class, but your mind was absent, unable to focus on school while other issues pushed to the forefront.

Regardless of what may have caused you to fall behind in school, you should know that your school wants you to succeed. Colleges and universities invest a lot of resources to investigate the unique needs of their students and to respond to those needs by developing support services that address them.

Some campuses offer free tutoring. Most have a counseling center, where you can talk with a trained counselor about what's bothering you. And your professors are available to talk about what you can do to catch back up.

When life overwhelms you and causes you too much stress, the most important thing you can do for yourself is to be proactive. Look at your student handbook, check out your school's Web site, or drop by the Dean of Students office or the campus health center to find out what academic, health, and emotional support services your school offers.

You may be surprised to find just how much assistance is available right on your campus.

*Doug*

Douglas Timboe, MD

Please send me your feedback and questions at [editor@studenthealth101.com](mailto:editor@studenthealth101.com).

## 5 WAYS TO PERSEVERE WHEN LIFE COLLIDES WITH YOUR STUDIES > CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

According to Moll, stress underlies many of the other impediments to academic success students cited. "We get the flu when our resistance is low, and our resistance can be low because we're stressed," she said. "Stress certainly contributes to sleep problems, as well as allergies heightening and colds and sore throats."

If you're looking for ways to persevere when life collides with your studies, being proactive about lowering your stress levels can be the key. The following tips can help you address the factors that can cause you to become stressed, lose sleep, get sick, and then

ultimately fall behind in your studies.



### 1. MAKE LISTS

Any student can tell you that being really busy is stressful. How you balance your busy schedule determines your ability to manage your stress, though. One way to keep track of what you need to accomplish is by making lists.

"Everything comes to you at once, but you can't take it all at once," said Heather Schaffer, a sophomore at SUNY College at Fredonia in Western New York. "You take it one thing at a time."

A 3.1 GPA student who majors in Speech Pathology and Audiology, Schaffer is also a member of the campus Figure Skating Club and Students

Procrastination methods vary from person to person. How do you procrastinate when it's time to write a paper or prepare for an exam?

Tell us Your Story. [CLICK](#)

Teaching Equals Positive Sexuality (STEPS). Through STEPS, Schaffer gives weekly presentations around campus to educate students about things like acceptance of homosexuality, date

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



# Sleep Deprived STUDENTS

According to a February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey, approximately 60% of students are probably not getting enough sleep.

> **15%** of students get less than six hours of sleep per night.

> **45%** of students get between six and seven hours of sleep per night.

Of those who are probably getting enough sleep, only 10% get eight or more hours of sleep per night.

Not surprisingly, sleep deprived

students—65% surveyed—say they've fallen asleep in class.

And as you might expect, students report having a harder time falling asleep during the school year than they do when school isn't in session. They attribute that difficulty to a variety of factors, with worries about personal issues topping the list and

affecting over one quarter of students. Other key impediments to sleep include:

- Staying up to complete school work** .....23.4%
- Worries about school work** ...18.8%
- Dorm/apartment/roommate noise** .....14.6%

Whatever the cause, sleep deprivation is a common problem on college campuses, and programs like the Colorado Sleep Campaign can help students figure out how to get enough sleep on a regular basis. 🛏



**GIVE US SOME BACKTALK.**

5 WAYS TO PERSEVERE WHEN LIFE COLLIDES WITH YOUR STUDIES > CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

rape, and STDs. She also works part-time on campus as a caterer.

With Schaffer's busy schedule, it's no wonder that lists afford her peace of mind. "I love crossing things off the list," she added. "You're looking at everything you have to do, but you're also looking at everything you've already accomplished."



## 2. Don't Procrastinate

Twelve percent of students in the 2005 ACHA study reported that Internet use/computer games were getting in the way of their studies. Those are just modern tools of procrastination, a habit that's been causing student stress for years.

But you don't need a computer to be able to procrastinate. Nearly

two-thirds of students say they've procrastinated so much that it affected their performance on an exam, paper, or course grade, according to a February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey.

**"EVERYTHING comes to you at once, but you can't take it all at once."**

—Heather Schaffer, SUNY College at Fredonia sophomore

When Stephen Dally, a freshman at Saint Lawrence University in Upstate New York, is in "procrastination mode," he's been known to clean his dorm room. "You have three papers due within a couple days of each other and you put it off," he said. "You know they have to be done, eventually, but you just don't want to do them."

**The top 3 factors that affect academic performance are: STRESS, SLEEP, COLDS/FLU**

—2005 National College Health Assessment

A member of the school's swim team, Dally has a full schedule. His tendency to procrastinate has caused him occasional stress. "I've gotten to the point where it's a few hours before a paper is due and I'm just wrapping up and I'm, like, 'Oh man, I still have to proof-read all this.' It's not a good thing to do to yourself."

## How can you avoid procrastinating?

Making those lists can help, especially if you prioritize the items you write down. What has to be done? Give

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

those tasks the highest priority. What do you have the least motivation to do—those will be the hardest tasks. Put those tasks near the top of the list, too, and get them over with.

You can also analyze the things you do when you procrastinate and then try to avoid doing them. Computer too tempting? Go work someplace on campus where you don't have easy access to one. Need to clean your room? Grab your stuff and find a spot where you can focus on the task at hand.

### 3. Prioritize Leisure

According to the February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey, 70% of students sometimes feel like

they're not going to be able to balance their school, personal, and work responsibilities. But no matter how busy or stressed-out you are, you need to find time to relax and have some fun. That may sound counter-intuitive, but it's true.

**15% of students get less than six hours of sleep per night.**

"Taking time for yourself to regenerate the body and the spirit has to be as important as brushing your teeth," said Moll. It's not the quantity of time, but the quality of time, she said. "Time to just exercise or time to read a book that isn't academic," she said. "It may just be 15 minutes per day, but it is a value."

For Schaffer, her Thursday-evening time with "the girls" is nonnegotiable. "We all watch 'Grey's Anatomy,'" she said. "There's a show on almost every night for one hour where all of us girls get together. We don't bring homework—it's a time where we just sit and watch the show."

While exercising and relaxing with friends are positive forms of leisure, not all college students spend their leisure time wisely, noted Moll, especially when it comes to drinking.

"Stress may contribute to alcohol abuse because students will self-medicate, but leisure should be renewing, not depleting," said Moll.



### 4. Don't Sacrifice Sleep

Stress and full schedules sometimes overwhelm students, causing them to lie awake at night worrying. Most people need between seven and nine hours of sleep to feel well rested, but according to the February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey, 60% of students aren't getting that much sleep on a regular basis.

**70% of students sometimes feel like they're not going to be able to balance their school, personal, and work responsibilities.**  
— February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey

Dally said that he averages between five and six hours per night. "I'd like more," he said, "but, unfortunately, I can't always get more because I have to be up before 6 a.m. for morning swim practice."

Moll said that students could set the brain to something more positive before bedtime. "Try saying to yourself as you get ready for bed, 'It

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

wasn't an easy day, but these three things happened today that I'm really proud of."

Finals are notoriously hard on students' sleep cycles and their health. You skimp on sleep to cram for exams and before you know it, you're shivering, sneezing, and reaching for a box of tissues.

For Dally, the end of the semester proved to be his breaking point in an otherwise calm semester. "The weather started getting cold," he said. "I was stressed-out because of finals, and swimming was hard. I was getting zero sleep because I was working, working, working. Then I got sick."

## 5. Take Advantage of Your School's Support System

OK. You're making lists; you're giving yourself enough time to sleep. You're trying not to procrastinate and you're scheduling time for leisure. But you're still REALLY stressed. Maybe you're dealing with a family/friend emergency, or perhaps you're battling some pretty scary stuff yourself, like anxiety or depression. Now it's time to get help.

"There are reasons why we all need one another and why we need support," said Moll. "Just as we might need stitches, we need counseling now and then. We need a place to go to be healed." For those who fear spilling their secrets, Moll said, "the



**"Taking time for yourself to regenerate the body and the spirit has to be as IMPORTANT as brushing your teeth"**

—Dr. Christine Moll, Associate Professor of Counseling & Human Services, Canisius College

counseling center on any college campus is bound to confidentiality, with the exception of life-threatening issues."

If you felt you needed to visit your school's counseling center, would you be embarrassed or feel stigmatized to seek help there?

**Tell us Your View.**

**CLICK** 

According to Schaffer, whose friend battles depression, there's a stigma on college campuses when it comes to discussing mental health. Unfortunately, shame factors in. "When my friend sees other students coping, she feels bad that she isn't," said Schaffer. "She'll ask me, 'Why can't I just make myself happy?'"

"Depression is an illness," added Schaffer. "Students need to be around others who tell them that it's not their fault and who encourage them to get help. If there's no one there to support them, they just keep it inside."

If we could learn at an early age how to deal with stress and be proactive enough to ask for help when we need it, Moll said that it would be life-changing. "This is not about just now," she said. "This is about setting up life skills right on up to the moment of our death. It's not just about our majors and getting a 4.0—it's about finding meaning in life and living a meaningful life." 🙌

MARIA PASCUCCI IS THE PRESIDENT OF CAMPUS CALM—WHERE STUDENTS SPEAK OUT ABOUT GRADES, STRESS, AND PERSONAL WELL-BEING. CAMPUS CALM HELPS STUDENTS ACHIEVE BALANCE, REDUCE STRESS, INCREASE SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND GET OUT OF THE STUDENTS' STATE OF PERPETUAL OVERWHELM.

WWW.CAMPUSCALM.COM



**GIVE US SOME BACKTALK.**



**TELL US YOUR STORY.**



**TELL US YOUR VIEW.**

