



Practical-methodical
recommendations for teachers

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SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH CHALLENGES





Success in higher education for students with learning and psychosocial health challenges

Practical-methodical recommendations for teachers

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INTRODUCTION

According to the data of the Lithuanian Statistics Department, in the academic year 2023-2024, 339 students with disabilities studied in higher education institutions: 109 in colleges and 230 students in universities. It is observed that from 2021-2022, the number of students with disabilities is consistently growing, which leads to the assumption that the need for diversity of information availability is also increasing (Balevičienė, Bikauskaitė, Baliūnas, 2023). However, these numbers can be much higher, since the statistics mainly represent physical disabilities, students with developmental, mental health disabilities have full rights to remain silent about them.

Lithuania, like other Western democracies, faces challenges in developing the ideas of an inclusive society in various fields: education, health care, social services and higher education. Human rights and social movements promote equal services for marginalized groups, including people with disabilities.

Inclusive education policies in higher education increase the social and cultural diversity of students, but there are micro-level challenges for both students and teachers. The main barriers are lack of awareness and stigma. So far, there is too little data on neurodiverse students: how many of them are enrolled in higher education, how well they are doing, and what support they need. One of the reasons is that students with neurodiversity often remain silent about their condition due to fear of stigmatization and discrimination, social isolation, low self-esteem and trust in teachers and the academic institution where they study. Targeted support would improve participation in higher education.

If you have already started reading this methodological book for high school teachers, we hope that you are interested in this topic and are the ones who are ready to help students who

experience learning challenges and high stress during their studies due to their neurodiversity. We are glad that you are a teacher who:

- Understanding the neurodiversity of students makes it easier to identify students' learning needs and provide appropriate support.

- You know about inclusive education where all students feel accepted and supported.

- By understanding different learning challenges, you apply appropriate methods that lead to better study results.

- You promote empathy and understanding of neurodiverse students in the community.

- You are creative, flexible, resourceful and innovate in your work as a teacher.

- You feel that you are contributing to lower student dropouts.

- You collaborate with colleagues and together create advanced educational environments for students experiencing learning challenges.

The first chapter presents European and Lithuanian regulations and laws, legal documents, which aim to ensure equal opportunities to study for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Emphasis is placed on ensuring students' individual needs, socialization and financial support.

The second chapter presents the concept of neurodiversity and its interpretations in the contexts of education and social life. It is also noted that it is not easy for students with neurodiversity to adapt and engage in academic life in higher education and a new social life.

The third chapter aims to reveal that the study environments of universities and colleges providing higher education are not always aligned with the needs and challenges of neurodifferent

students that they have to experience during their studies. It also aims to show the teacher that in order to ensure the most successful study process of neurodifferent students, the attention of the academic staff should be directed not only to the so-called problematic areas of study, but also to those aspects that are identified as the strengths of the student and the importance of a favorable social environment.

The fourth chapter provides recommendations for teachers on creating an effective study environment when working with students with individual needs. This chapter presents strategies for creating an accessible learning environment, discusses support options for students with attention difficulties, specific learning disorders, and emphasizes the importance of communication with students and the learning environment.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to teachers, because only a teacher who feels good or very good psychologically can work in a higher education institution. Due to the constantly growing demands, the need to make quick decisions, and the expansion of responsibilities and functions, it can be difficult for a teacher to maintain an internal balance. Therefore, we hope that the provided advice on maintaining psycho-emotional health will contribute to strengthening teachers' self-efficacy and motivation for work.

This methodological tool for higher education lecturers contains information gathered during the implementation of the project “Student learning challenges and psychosocial health as the factors for successful studies” (the project was funded by the Fund of Science and Arts Projects of Kauno kolegija HEI, 2023-2024).

With best wishes!
Authors

1. LEGAL DOCUMENTS REGULATING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

What is important to know?

Formally, education is still the prerogative of each country, in principle the European Union (hereinafter EU) can only support and supplement the initiatives of national governments in this sector (Dakowska, 2019).

In Europe, it is recognized at the highest political level that education is important for improving people's lives, creating jobs, economic growth, social justice and strengthening European identity. Social inclusion in higher education – often referred to as the social dimension of higher education – means increasing access to higher education and education for underrepresented groups, improving Europe's human capital and innovation capacity, while promoting the social inclusion of citizens and increasing their opportunities in the labor market (Kottmann, 2019).

The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, signed by 29 countries, recognized the need to create more comparable and compatible education systems across Europe (European Commission, 1999), supporting greater access to higher education in Europe and beyond.

The EU's goal of expanding higher education and completion is well expressed in the “Europe 2020” strategy, which is to increase the number of 30-34-year-olds with a higher education or equivalent to at least 40%. Increasing social inclusion in higher education was one of the four main goals of 2017. The objectives of the updated EU higher education agenda of the European Commission (Kottmann, 2019).

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is the most important document of the Council of Europe that aims to protect human rights and freedoms in the European region. Although the Convention does not define specific principles of science or aspects of the right to science, it provides important guarantees that apply in this area.

The Convention recognizes the human right to education, which is fundamental to science and learning. This includes the right to free primary and compulsory education and access to higher education. In addition, the convention recognizes the right to free access to opinion and information, which is essential for the development and promotion of science.

It is important to mention that the convention also guarantees freedom for scientific research and experimentation, as its principles include the right to privacy and the right to personal freedom, which are necessary to promote innovation and progress.

Thus, although the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms cannot be directly understood as a document focusing on science, it provides fundamental rights that are necessary for science, learning and research (European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international agreement designed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and their participation in society. Although the Convention does not define specific articles for science, it contains important provisions that directly affect the access to education and participation in science for persons with disabilities. Lithuania ratified this document in 2010 (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006).

The most important provisions of the Convention related to science include:

The right to equal access to education (Article 24 - Education) The Convention indicates that persons with disabilities have the right to full and equal access to the education system, including schools, universities and vocational training institutions. This means that appropriate accessible teaching methods, tools and infrastructure must be ensured to enable access to education regardless of disability or disability-related barriers.

Right to special measures (Article 8 – Public education, Article 21 – Freedom of expression and freedom of opinion, access to information, Article 24 – Education) The Convention recognizes that not all persons with disabilities can use standard education services. It therefore emphasizes the need to provide special measures and support to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the necessary support and assistance to achieve their educational goals.

The principle of inclusion (Article 20 - Personal mobility, Article 24 - Education) The Convention supports the principle of inclusion, which promotes the integration of all students into the general education system. This means that steps should be taken to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream schools and learn alongside their peers.

Thus, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes the right of persons with disabilities to receive education and participate in education, based on principles aimed at ensuring their equality and inclusion in the educational process (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006).

Summary: The first chapter mentions European regulations and laws, legal documents, which promote ensuring equal opportunities to study for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The above-mentioned documents define general principles and recommendations on how higher education institutions should organize studies and provide assistance to students, taking into account their individual needs.

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2. THE CONCEPT OF NEURODIVERSITY AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NEURODIFFERENT?

What is important to know?

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term commonly used to describe people's neurological differences in how they process incoming social and sensory information, create and maintain social connections, focus attention, use memory, plan routines, events, and maintain communication (Bertilsson Rosqvist et al., 2020). Neurodiversity is a multi-layered and extremely complex concept and phenomenon that, depending on the context, can mean several different things.

First of all, it is a fact of the neuro-biological diversity of humanity, which shows that due to various physiological reasons, the brains of different people are characterized by different neurological development, which later leads to differently functioning brains. Because of these differences, people not only perceive and experience the reality around them differently, use different communication mechanisms when communicating with other people, but also create social relationships in a unique way. This behavior caused by neurological differences often does not coincide with the prevailing and socially acceptable behavior patterns in society, so neuro different people, e.g. autistic, can often be (under)estimated as malfunctioning and not meeting socially acceptable societal norms and standards. For example, in a society where eye contact when communicating with another person is seen as a necessary component of social etiquette, a person who has difficulty making and maintaining eye contact during a conversation may be seen as avoidant, rude, tactless, etc. However, it has been scientifically proven that avoiding eye

contact is one of the most effective self-protection mechanisms that autistic people use to avoid overstimulation and *sensory meltdown*. Thus, avoiding eye contact should be understood as a behavior-mechanism that helps to reduce unpleasant and over-intense arousal caused by excessive stimulation in a certain part of the brain (Hadjikhani et al. 2017). This example is only one of many, and which, despite its scientific validity, is still little known, and therefore, in this sense, there is still a lack of knowledge and a deeper understanding of the differently functioning brain and the differences in behavior determined by it. Therefore, neurodiversity studies and the latest research by neuroscientists significantly change the so far dominant Eiblist concept of a "correctly" functioning brain.

Another context in which the term neurodiversity is commonly used is in human rights and inclusive societies. The neurodiversity movement, which began around the year 2000, is mostly associated with equal rights and opportunities for autistic or other psychosocial disabled persons to participate in education, health care, political, cultural and social life, as well as to represent oneself.

When it comes to neurodiversity, it is important to emphasize that this concept is often used as the opposite of neuro typicality, that is, to describe statistically normal neurological development, but it should not be. Neuro typicality, although statistically the most common type of neurodevelopment among humans, is just another type of neurodevelopment among many others. Thus, neurodiversity includes all types of neurology, including neuro typicality.

The term neurodiversity was first used by the Australian sociologist Judy Singer in 1998, encouraging a new approach to psychosocial disability and, next to the dominant biomedical model of neuro differences, to turn to a social model of interpretation of disability, in which the person and his

(dis)power is seen not so much on the micro, i.e. individual level, as on the macro, i.e. societal level. Both neurodiversity researchers and self-representing neurodiversity explain this concept and emphasize that it is not a political, philosophical or scientific idea, but an indisputable proof of human biological diversity. In other words, the infinite variation in people's cognitive abilities, where each person has different neurological characteristics that have a significant impact on a person's thinking, communication, learning, creating social interactions with other people, and experiencing the physical environment, i.e., sensorics. As Alan Walker (2021) argues, neurodiversity can be seen as an alternative, or complementary, approach to the pathologizing of neuro diverse individuals, e.g. explaining autism using not only a biomedical health model, but also a biopsychosocial one, in which any neuro difference is seen not as a limitation of the person, but as a limitation resulting from an insufficiently adapted environment for a person with specific needs and (dis)abilities. For example, learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, etc.) are seen more not only as an individual problem, but also as a limitation of the education system, which does not accommodate different learning methods, styles and environments for these people.

Also, as already mentioned, neurodiversity can be defined as a social movement whose proponents put forward the idea of an inclusive society and thus strive for greater involvement of neuro diverse individuals in various areas of social life: education, health care, political, economic, cultural and others. As Alan Walker (2021) points out, the autistic rights movement *arose* in response to certain prevailing circumstances. First, the discourse and practice surrounding autism was (and still is) dominated by what he calls *the pathology paradigm*. It describes autism as either a medical pathology or a psychiatric condition - a "disorder". Second, because of this pathologizing concept, autistic individuals have long been stigmatized, misrepresented,

dehumanized, emotionally harmed, devalued, and otherwise socially traumatized at both institutional and community levels (Walker, 2021). Long after the sociologist Judy Singer proposed the concept of neurodiversity, the term was used as a synonym for talking about autism and autistic people and their representation and rights. However, after a few decades, the term neurodiversity has become an umbrella term that covers an increasing number of different psychosocial disabilities, learning difficulties, psychiatric disorders, etc. conditions: dyslexia, dyscalculia, depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Another important aspect when talking about neurodiversity is neurodivergence. The term *neuro divergent* refers to a person who differs from the so-called "norm" of society. Neuro typicality is a phenotype of neurodevelopmental functioning that falls within the so-called statistical normativity and meets the criteria of "typical neurological development and functioning" that dominate society. Neuro typicality is often defined as the opposite of neurodivergence, and when describing neurodivergent characteristics, they are usually divided into those that pose the most challenges to the individual and those that can be identified as strengths.

In various contexts, it is indicated that approximately 1 in 20 people are neurodifferent and even 1 in 5 have distinct neurodivergent characteristics: creativity, non-standard "out of the box" thinking, analytical thinking, unique memory, etc. Autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD and other neuro-identities are becoming more and more known and understood by the public thanks to active neurodiversity movement activists. Nevertheless, neurodivergence includes not only socially acceptable characteristics and behaviors, sometimes called talents, but also challenges, among which the most common are the following: complex maintenance of social relations and communication, alternative communication methods, learning,

especially related to reading, text comprehension, writing, attention concentration, hyperactivity, sensitivity, anxiety, strong fixation on routine, narrow field of interests, etc. As these differences often lead people to be seen as 'not like everyone else', neurodiverse students may also experience more challenges in fitting in both in society and at university or college, making it harder to make or maintain social connections with other people, and as a result experience social isolation. (self)isolation, especially with peers . It is also more common to feel pressured by others to behave as expected and to be condemned for not being able to adapt to constant changes (Spaeth, Pearson, 2023).

The following are mentioned among the qualities that are usually identified as the advantages of neurodifferent people: strong internal motivation and the ability to remain focused on an area of interest for a long time, non-standard thinking "out of the box", attentiveness and attention to details, creativity, the ability to work effectively under stressful conditions, etc. Of course, these are very generalized traits, the expression of which is very different and complexly vary in the case of each person, especially because neuro-differences are often overlapping, e.g. autism can often coexist with attention focus, hyperactivity disorder and various mental health conditions, so the previously listed characteristics and traits can manifest in a unique and contextual way. For example in some situations, stress can act as a barrier blocking any activity, and in others, as a stimulus to act.

Summarizing what was stated earlier, it is worth noting that in modern society, the topic of neurodiversity is discussed more and more often and in more and more diverse contexts, starting from human rights and ending with health sciences. Thanks to the neurodiversity social movement, more and more individuals with various psychosocial disabilities are choosing to pursue higher education in various academic fields. In certain cases, the

physical study environment, the process of study organization, or the content of studies and relationships with teachers become insurmountable barriers for neurodifferent students, but as shown by the conducted scientific studies, in other cases, these can be easily removed obstacles. Although some of the learning difficulties and challenges faced by neurodiverse students are similar to others, some of them are specific to different neurology and the resulting learning differences as well as difficulties or advantages. All this is discussed in the following section.

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3. NEURODIVERSITY, NEURODIFFERENCE AND LEARNING DIFFERENCES

What is important to know?

By promoting the inclusion of neurodifferent students and motivating them to actively pursue higher education, the rapidly growing diversity in educational institutions is becoming more and more noticeable. For a long time, the accessibility of higher education for people with various disabilities was an area that was little questioned. Still, in the last few years, the idea of an inclusive society has become not only a widely discussed topic both at the political and legal level, but also practically implemented in various projects related to development of an inclusive society. Western democratic societies are rapidly moving towards an inclusive society, which aims to make most areas of social life such as education, health care, political participation, culture more and more open to previously marginalized social groups such as mobility challenges elderly people, people with intellectual disabilities or psychosocial disabilities. Although today almost all the areas of social life face the problem of diversity and solve the challenges arising from it, it is necessary to emphasize that we are still not always able to create and ensure a safe environment for diversity, including higher education institutions.

The study environments of both universities and colleges providing higher education are not always compatible with the needs and challenges of neurodiverse students. In order to as minimize much as possible the experiences of students experiencing various difficulties related to psychosocial disabilities, it becomes extremely important to understand not only what difficulties students face, but also whether they feel safe disclosing their psychosocial disabilities and mental health problems. Research reveals that often these students tend to use

the so-called *self-silence practices* during all studies to avoid revealing their psychosocial disabilities, which are often invisible or easily masked (Syharat, et al. 2023). This is usually done in order to avoid a negative experience of disclosure that they had while studying at school or in another institution. These students see studies as a new stage in which they seek to create a new identity, so they disguise themselves sometimes even regardless of how supportive the study environment may be. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2022 that only 37% of students with disabilities reported this to their institution (NCES, 2022). This shows that the responsibility should not always be transferred to the institution due to students' motivation to disclose their diagnoses and disabilities, as individual previous experiences have no less influence on this decision of students. However, the majority of other studies related to the learning challenges and difficulties of neurodifferent students show that the most important factor that allows these students to successfully achieve academic goals is multifaceted institutional support, which includes both adaptation of the physical environment and ensuring respectful social relations with other members of the academic staff - teachers, administrative staff and other students (Hillier, et. al. 2018; Scott, 2021). Only when students feel safe in disclosing and communicating their difficulties will it be possible to create an inclusive physical study environment, adapt the study content and process to those experiencing different learning challenges students, as well as to ensure more effective teacher-student relations and a safe psychological climate during studies.

Education in general and higher education specifically experience these challenges particularly clearly. As universities and colleges become more open, more and more people with various psychosocial health challenges decide to pursue higher education every year. Although these challenges faced by neurodiverse, e.g. students with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or

other learning differences are often similar in their adjustment to university or college to those of students without these disabilities. However, the complexity and specificity of some challenges differ significantly. For example, properly managing study stress can be much more difficult for neurodifferent students due to their concomitant psychiatric, adaptive, etc. health challenges. Also, the level of stress experienced can be significantly higher due to the culture of constant masking and self-silencing. Also, the lack of social skills can lead to various communicative tensions and difficult situations when communicating with teachers and fellow students. Therefore, more and more attention is paid to understanding the needs of different students and their different learning challenges.

In recent years, the increasing attention to the inclusion of neurodiverse students has led to various systemic changes in higher education institutions. Research shows that effectively functioning services representing students with various disabilities are one of the most important factors in ensuring a successful study process and helping not only to identify, but also to solve emerging learning difficulties. However, despite all the changes that have already taken place in this area, the implementation of the goals of inclusive higher education requires a constant rethinking of various aspects and challenges related to the learning challenges of neurodiverse students, such as academic honesty and confidence, changing negative preconceptions, adaptation of study content, materials and physical environment, and others.

Although for a long time the learning challenges experienced by students with psychosocial disabilities were named as learning difficulties and learning disabilities, it was gradually proposed to move to a less derogatory and negative connotation term - *learning differences*. This is mostly related to the fact that the concept of "learning differences" refers to different ways of learning, different learning rates, the ability to

maintain attention, memorization and the use of motivational techniques related to learning. Learning differences also means focusing more, not on a person's cognitive disabilities and limitations, but on individual student motivational mechanisms and barriers to learning that can affect learning outcomes, e.g. students' social and cultural contexts, co-existing psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety, as well as students' strengths, i.e. talents, etc. Although the term '*learning disability/disorder*' in itself does not have a negative meaning, it does not include the advantages and strengths that every learner has. For example, it has been proven that people with dyslexia often have better three-dimensional spatial thinking, creativity, imagination, symbolic and abstract thinking abilities, etc. (Manzoli, 2016). Thus, while the term 'learning disability/disability' is not in itself derogatory, the contexts in which it is used suggest that it is more associated with the negative experiences and characteristics of learners and therefore often excludes the advantages that a neuro-disabled person may have, such as the ability to think critically "out of box".

Therefore, another particularly important change in this area is related to the traditional teaching methods initially criticized by neuroscientists in the beginning of the 21st century and the proposal of a new paradigm of *twice exceptionality* (Assouline et al., 2009, 2012; Willard-Holt et al., 2013). The authors of this paradigm draw attention to the fact that at the same time a student can be talented, especially gifted, and at the same time he or she could be a learner experiencing complex learning challenges. These students often have special academic abilities, but at the same time they may need assistance in areas such as interpreting and participating in social situations, communicating with teachers, self-regulation of emotions, planning time and activities, etc. Therefore, in this context, an approach based on respect for neurodiversity becomes

especially important, as it allows us to see not only the weakest aspects of the students' learning process, but also their strengths.

So, after summarizing all that has been stated, it is important to emphasize that in order to ensure the most successful study process of neurodifferent students, the attention of the academic staff should be directed not only to the so-called "problematic" areas of study, but also to those aspects that are named as strengths of the student. Also, when assessing the learning challenges experienced by students, it is always appropriate to pay attention to the wider social and cultural context of the individual, e.g. try to find out what are the possible sources of the anxiety and distress experienced, which hinder the achievement of the set academic goals. It is also important to realize that when dealing with neurodiverse individuals, it is necessary to avoid any generalization, because neurodiverse students have different characteristics, and even two students with the same diagnosis, e.g. ADHD, may face very different learning challenges that also depend on various social characteristics, e.g. gender, age, economic conditions, co-existing disorders, chronic diseases, etc. Likewise, they may require very different learning environments, social relations, communication and learning methods. All of this is covered in other sections of this publication.

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4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS ON HOW TO CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

What is important to know ?

Participation in community life, including work, education and leisure, throughout life is considered an essential component of everyone's health and well-being. Participation includes access and opportunities to meaningfully and actively engage in activities and connect with others. In the International Classification of Health, Functioning and Disability model, both individual and environmental (contextual) factors contribute to participation. Despite its importance, the literature consistently reflects that people with disabilities participate less in the community than people without disabilities. This is especially true for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Research shows that children and youth with autism participate in fewer activities and less often than their typically developing peers. This pattern of reduced community participation has been found to continue into adulthood. Adults with autism also report being less satisfied with their participation than adults in the general population. Furthermore, despite an interest in community activities, adults with autism report that they do not actually participate in these activities (Bagatell et al., 2022).

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING ACCESSIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Higher education teachers have an essential role to play in making the subjects taught accessible to all, creating an atmosphere of equity and inclusion. Although it is difficult to anticipate the individual needs of each student, there are many things educators can do to create an inclusive and accessible environment for diverse learners (Thurber, 2018).

Most of the strategies reflect Universal Learning Design (ULD) principles. ULD is an educational system that emphasizes the use of flexible objectives, methods, materials, and assessment to provide effective instruction for diverse learners. The ULD principles help instructors design courses that address the diverse needs of learners from the start so that all students can benefit, not just thinking about accessibility.

Students with learning challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism or other specific learning disabilities may experience various challenges or difficulties in studying in a university environment. These challenges may include:

➤ ***Accessibility and adaptability:*** *Students may experience difficulties related to accessibility to learning materials, technology and physical space. It is important to ensure that all courses, materials and facilities are tailored to their needs.*

➤ ***Getting support and information:*** *It can be difficult to get enough support and information about the resources, services and offers available at the university, especially if there are no appropriate connections and departments.*

➤ ***Educator and community understanding:*** *Often, teachers and the community do not always understand the challenges of specific learning difficulties. This can lead to dissatisfaction and a feeling that students are not getting the most out of their learning experience.*

➤ ***Time management and organization:*** *Many students with learning disabilities may experience difficulties with time management and organization, which are important, especially in a university environment with a high volume of tasks and demands.*

➤ ***Social and emotional challenges:*** *Students may experience social and emotional challenges as a result of their*

learning problems, such as feeling isolated or negatively viewed in the community.

➤ ***Availability of special support services:*** *Inadequate choice of support services, in areas such as special aids for exams, can prevent students with learning difficulties from reaching their full potential.*

These challenges can be reduced and overcome if colleges implement a range of measures and policies to support students with learning disabilities and ensure they have equal opportunities in the learning process. This may include accessible support, staff training, information availability, community understanding and involvement (Thurber et al., 2018).

Sensory processing sensitivity (SPS) is a personality trait that reflects individual differences in sensitivity to negative and positive environmental information. A high level of SPS is associated with a greater number of stress-related problems if the environment is unfavorable, but it also appears to increase the ability to take advantage of a health-promoting environment. Therefore, understanding SPS can fundamentally update the methods and tools we use to strengthen the mental health of individuals (Bas et al., 2021)

Through the senses, individuals can perceive and process a considerable amount of information from the outside world. The process by which the nervous system receives, modulates, integrates, organizes, and responds to stimuli is known as sensory processing. Sensory processing is critical to adaptive behavior as it allows individuals to respond appropriately to specific situations and influences their overall functioning and psychophysical well-being (Fabio et al., 2024).

Different theoretical approaches confirm that sensing and perceiving environmental stimuli is a programmed way of

survival by which a person seeks to adapt to the context. However, although humans are neurobiologically predisposed to survive in the environment, differences have been found in how individuals respond to the environment, as some people's brains appear to be more sensitive than others. A recent systematic review found that individuals with high SPS experience poorer quality of life in physical, mental, emotional, and social domains (Costa-López et al., 2021).

Current theory suggests that SPS is a holistic construct comprised of the following core features: greater depth of processing, emotional reactivity and empathy, subtle sensitivity, and overstimulation (Bas et al., 2021).

Some authors divide the sensory integration process into 4 phases: *registration* (the brain receives sensory information from the sensory organs); *modulation* (allows you to adjust the intensity of the stimulus); *discrimination* (the stimulus is organized and interpreted in such a way as to distinguish its relevance, features and specific properties) and *response* (the brain integrates all processed stimuli to create an appropriate response that will lead to certain behaviors and movements) (Galiana-Simal A., 2020). Sensory processing differences are also common in adults with autism, with prevalence ranging from 77 to 95 percent (Bagatell et al., 2022). This may mean that their senses and reactions to their environment are unusual or intense. Difficulty regulating sensory information can lead to over- or under-reaction to environmental stimuli. This can manifest as impulsivity or, conversely, difficulty concentrating. Research shows that most individuals with ASD have sensory processing patterns that differ from typically developing individuals (Boogert et al., 2022). Problems with sensory information processing can interfere with learning and social interaction. For example, he may have difficulty concentrating in an audience due to hypersensitivity to noise, or he may have

difficulty understanding other people's social cues due to sensory overload.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DIFFICULTIES

Inadequate focus on a specific task and sustaining it during task completion are typical difficulties experienced by students with neurodiversity. Various stimuli - extraneous sounds, the movement of various objects, the actions of people nearby become essential factors that prevent concentration during the performance of tasks. It can be so hard not only to focus, but also to stay focused. It is more difficult to maintain attention during longer tasks and tasks that require more effort and willpower, it is difficult for them to transfer their attention from one activity to another, to distribute it, for example, to listen to instructions and do something at the same time (Piščalkienė, 2008).

One of the main features of adults with ADHD is difficulty in paying attention. If hyperactivity was a very common and noticeable trait in childhood, it usually disappears by adulthood. Any extraneous stimulus starts to interfere with concentration, accepting the information presented, performing tasks by oneself, there are difficulties in memorizing information and performing tasks (Jasinskaitė et al., 2021; Fabio et al., 2024).

About 40% of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have normal or above average intelligence coefficient (IQ). The rest may have varying degrees of intellectual disability. The cognitive process of individuals with ASD is often related to problems in cognitive and sensory integration processes. Attention difficulties are one of the most common cognitive impairments in individuals with ASD (Navickienė et al., 2019). Since people with ASD have very different intellectual abilities, there is a high probability that we, as teachers, meet or will meet these people in our professional activities.

The summarized results of the study of 20 countries show that 24 percent of university students have symptoms of depression or have already been diagnosed with depression (Akhtar et al., 2020). Depression and anxiety are closely related to attention difficulties. Individuals with depression or anxiety complain that they have difficulty concentrating, maintaining attention, and remembering this information (Akhtar et al., 2020).

Many students with attention difficulties would say:

"Many lectures make me want to get up and leave after 10 minutes. Very often that's what I do...I go out, walk down the hall and come back...it gets a little easier" (extract from Cline, Nolan, 2017).

This situation allows us, as teachers, to understand that it is not enough to just present new material, but we need to find ways to convey information as attractively and not boring as possible. In addition, teachers should advise students how to plan and organize their time, how to motivate themselves during studies, and what attention training strategies to choose.

Strategies for maintaining attention during lectures

Teachers could use audio and visual aids to help students stay focused during classes. One of the ways is to emphasize the most important questions and facts by saying that *"this information is very important, so pay attention to what I will say, etc.."* Another way is to repeat the most important information and present it in different ways (for example, orally or in writing).

To improve visualization, it is suggested to highlight the main statements (facts) in a brighter color, to write on the board with a writing tool of different colors. Visualization helps them understand information better.

Recently, smart technologies have been increasingly used not only in personal life, but also in studies. Using computers and other smart devices, it is possible to extract colors, animations, and sound effects that help focus attention and develop memory.

Clince and Nolan (2017) offer suggestions for helping students focus during lectures:

- Print or have lecture material on a smart device and follow it, note the most important points in that material.
- Drink water whenever you want (it helps with concentration). It is also recommended to chew a chewing gum, you can use a stress-reducing soft ball or another tool.
- If the student wants to stand up and it does not bother anyone - let him do it for a minute or so.

A large number of independent work tasks, reading the materials while preparing for midterms and exams characterizes studies in higher education. Therefore, many neurodiverse students would share the following thoughts:

"I tried to concentrate, but I couldn't...I can't read for more than 5 minutes, my mind wanders somewhere" (extract from Clince, Nolan, 2017).

Below are tips for students that should be passed on by teachers to improve attention when absorbing new information and performing various written tasks (Piščalkienė, 2008; Clince, Nolan, 2017; Dou et al., 2022):

- First of all, find a calm and quiet learning environment, where there is no noise and nothing to disturb your concentration.
- Prepare a neat desk before starting to study.

- Do not forget to read what the assigned topic is, what are the independent work task to be completed.
- Start with more difficult tasks.
- If printed learning materials are used for studies, they should be neatly placed in separate folders.
- Leave space for additional information on all study note sheets.
- When reading new material, write down questions and try to answer them.
- Highlight the most important information in the text with bright colors (in the paper version with a colored pen, in the digital version – with the selected color for highlighting).
- Systematically take breaks (at least every 2 academic hours). During the breaks, do not forget to eat, drink, go out into the fresh air, and do physical exercises.
- Learning in different ways: by reading, watching videos, and most importantly, by marking down what seems most important.
- After completing a task, no matter how small, write it down. This will increase motivation and give you a sense of achievement at the end of the day.

While studying at a college or university, many things are constantly happening - you need to attend classes, complete independent work tasks, prepare for settlements, participate in various activities and events, do homework, go to work. Due to the wide range of activities, it is difficult for students, especially those with ADHD, to coordinate activities, start them on time, or finish them on time. Below is a possible case study of a student with ADHD.

"I'm involved in a lot of different jobs...I'm just throwing myself everywhere and I'm getting nowhere...I start, I don't finish" (extract from Clinice, Nolan, 2017).

Time management can be especially challenging for neurodiverse students. However, these challenges can be avoided by choosing the right strategies and tools. Here are some tips that can help students successfully plan and manage time (Clinice, Nolan, 2017; Navickienė et al., 2019):

- Start each day with a to-do list that reflects the priorities of the work.
- The list should separate "need to do" and "want to do".
- Rest and food are very important elements in planning time for tasks.
- Plan the time for a period of 2 or 3 hours and provide an additional time of at least 15 minutes if something is not done in time.
- Encourage and reward yourself for completed tasks (a trip, delicious food, purchase of a desired product, etc.).

Calendars can be very useful for planning time. It is suggested to use digital (Google Calendar, Microsoft Outlook) or paper calendars.

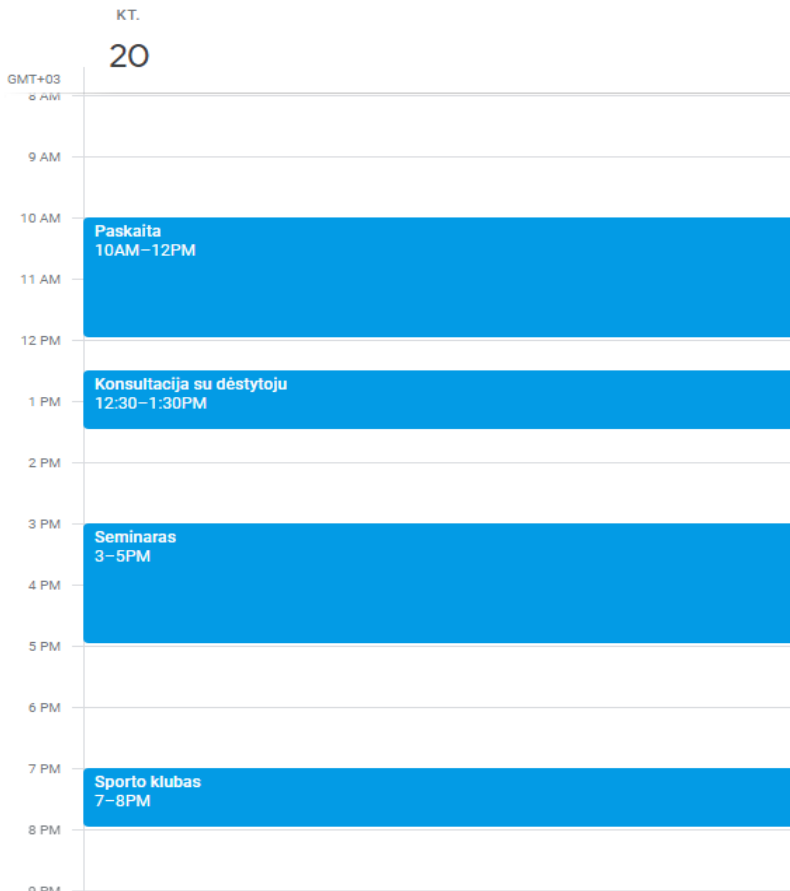


Figure 4.1 Digital time planner Google Calendar

These days, we have a wide range of smart technologies to use to create to-do lists. However, keep in mind that a paper version of the task planner can also be useful for time management. Below are some names of task scheduling apps:

- Todoist
- Trello
- Habitica

- Evernote
- Focus Booster
- MindNode
- Microsoft To Do
- Wunderlist

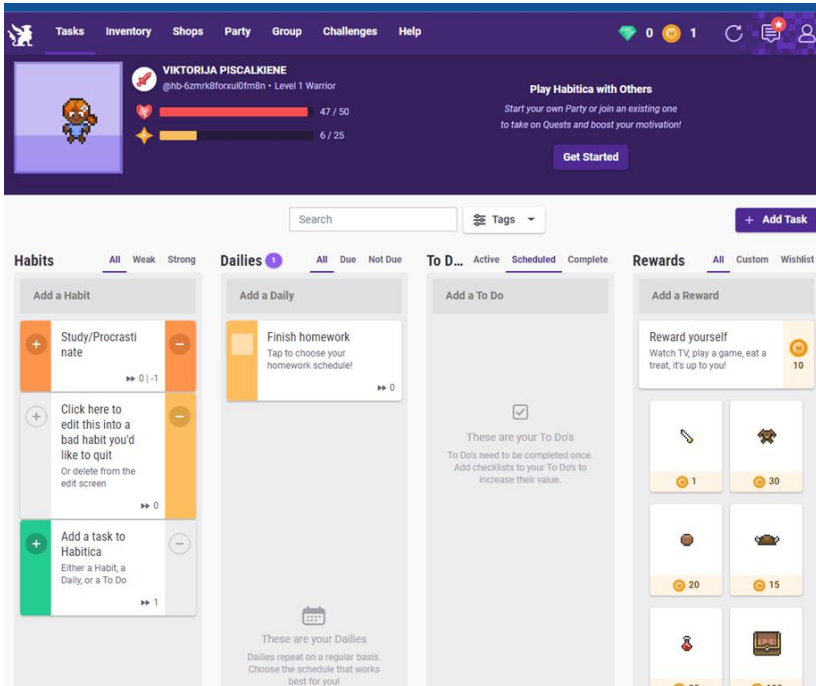


Figure 4.2. Scheduling tasks using a smart app

Neurodiverse students often struggle to achieve good academic results due to lack of focus and time management difficulties. Therefore, the purposefully didactically planned activities of the teacher, especially with the help of smart information tools, can help students to achieve successful studies in higher education.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

Students learn better when they feel respected, included, and when teachers care about their development. Students with disabilities may experience stigma, marginalization, and negative stereotypes from peers and teachers. Davis, in *Tools for Teaching*, states that it is important for teachers to "be aware of any prejudices and stereotypes that [they] may have internalized... Their attitudes and values not only influence the attitudes and values of their students, but they can also affect how they teach, especially their assumptions about students...which can lead to unequal learning outcomes within their groups" (Davis, 2009).

Strategies for creating an inclusive and friendly group atmosphere:

➤ It is necessary to pay attention to your communication with students. In courses where the teacher-student relationship allows, you should try to learn to call students by their first names as well. Use group engagement strategies that allow students to contribute in a variety of ways, such as online discussion boards, classroom discussions, and individual assignments.

➤ It is important to pay attention to group interaction and create conditions for it to take place. Apply student engagement strategies that help build relationships, trust, and a learning community within the group.

➤ It is necessary to respond to micro aggressions in the group. Students with disabilities experience many everyday comments and behaviors that, while not intended to offend, can nevertheless be stigmatizing and/or dehumanizing. Micro aggressions ultimately express implicit assumptions and prejudices that can harm the target group, alienate them from their peers and the learning community that teachers are trying to create. It is important for educators to address micro

aggressions in the group, normalize inclusive and appropriate language, and consider effective strategies for turning difficult dialogues into teachable moments.

It is very important to maintain open communication with students. There are various ways that teachers can create a framework for open communication.

It is necessary to consider the possibility of including an "Provision on Inclusive Learning" in the curriculum of each teacher. At the beginning of the course, the teacher could say: "I care about your success in this subject of study." We will all need to adapt because we all learn differently. If there are any aspects of this course that hinder your learning or set you apart, please let me know as soon as possible. Together, we will develop methods that will meet both your needs and the course requirements. If you require formal conditions, you are entitled to their satisfaction. You can contact the head of the department."

After receiving notification from the head of the department that the student has requested individual learning conditions, the student should be contacted individually, privately, to discuss what support would be most appropriate for him. Students do not always volunteer to report their disabilities or specific learning disabilities because they may worry about revealing sensitive medical information to the instructor. Regardless of whether or not the student discloses details about his or her disability, you can discuss appropriate educational accommodations. In some cases, the adaptation may be very simple, such as more time to complete a task. In other cases, the teacher and the student may need constant discussions about how to help him. It may be useful for the teacher to elaborate on upcoming activities or tasks and ask the student what additional conditions he or she may need. During the course, it is useful to periodically consult with the student. Not all needs can be

predicted in advance, and depending on the nature of some disabilities, needs may change during the semester.

Disabilities or learning difficulties may find it difficult to recognize when they need help and to seek appropriate help. The psychological concept of metacognition also includes the ability to evaluate one's own understanding and recognize gaps in knowledge. Difficulties in cognitive abilities, such as impaired working memory and slow processing speed, can affect students' ability to recognize their own difficulties and identify the most effective sources of help, leading to reduced help-seeking behavior. Recognizing the challenges of cognitive deficits in learning disabilities is also critical to consider the role of the social and educational environment in shaping the learning experience (Wang et al., 2024).

Students with slow information processing speed may have difficulty managing their time effectively, may need more time to complete assignments, and may find it difficult to manage their time effectively and meet deadlines. In addition, slow processing speed may affect their persistence, as they may become frustrated by the excessive time and effort required to perform complex tasks (Wang et al., 2024).

Each of us is different and we also absorb information through different sensory senses: some people remember visually presented information better, others have a better auditory memory. It is very important to provide information to students by alternative methods, for example, when the teacher presents to the students in the audience the date of settlement or changes in the audience, all this information must be written on the board and repeatedly reminded by sending an e-mail message by post. This will provide a comprehensive opportunity for the dissemination of the most important information in the ways acceptable to all.

ADAPTATION OF LEARNING SPACES

The learning environment is a unique space for obtaining, receiving and assimilating knowledge, information, created individually by each learner. The educational environment created by the teacher's efforts often determines how the student will feel during lectures, what kind of learning environment he will create or be able to engage in the learning process. A positive learning environment increases student engagement and motivation, allows students to build stronger relationships with peers and teachers, encourages collaboration, and increases students' sense of belonging in their learning. The learning environment not only acts as a catalyst but also promotes global awareness, which in turn easily connects students and encourages them to share ideas (Onwubiko, 2023).

The teacher, when planning and moderating the teaching/learning process, should devote enough time to creating a favorable learning environment, including the material base of various teaching tools: *visual* (pictures, posters, maps, diagrams, texts, etc.), *audio* (verbal communication of the teacher, various audio recordings, etc.) *audiovisual* (videos, films, video projection systems, interactive screens, etc.) and *sensorimotor* (tactile or other scientific tools, tools that promote concentration or attention, etc.) teaching tools to provide students with diversity to choose how to accept and absorb the provided educational material without disturbing the unique learning environment. When creating a favorable learning environment, it is important to remember that it consists not only of the teacher's attitudes, preparation for teaching, dissemination of information, but also of ensuring a favorable social, emotional, and physical learning environment for the student (Brédikyté et al., 2010).

Ensuring physical accessibility includes an analysis of building location, audience location (within the building), as

well as audience layout and audience technology (i.e. lighting, tables, seating, projection, whiteboards, etc.). When considering the physical accessibility of the audience, we must keep in mind:

➤ Involve students in thinking about accessibility in the auditorium by making suggestions related to furniture (possibility of arranging tables, chairs, transformations if needed, easy mobility), lighting (switching on lighting zones, possibility to reduce the intensity of lights), sound (output devices, audio speakers or headphones for individual listening when extraneous sounds are easily distracting) or the availability of educational materials presented during lectures (text size, use of charts, pictures in the presentation material).

➤ It is important for the teacher to get to know, at least minimally, the diversity of the students he will teach before starting the course. This would facilitate the preparation for lectures, paying attention to the adaptation of the audience (arrangement of benches in rows, groups or circles), the selection of audio or video equipment, the preparation/adaptation of educational materials (knowing in advance about the visible disabilities of students (e.g. hearing disabilities), it is possible to prepare accessible materials involving the student to work with the whole group).

➤ Moving lectures to another auditorium at the last minute can cause a variety of difficulties for students, including those with visual, hearing or mobility impairments, as well as those on the autism spectrum, ADHD, emotional disorders or people suffering from anxiety.

FEATURES OF TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

Structuring the learning environment can be difficult for students with specific learning disabilities and cognitive difficulties. Psychological theory of self-regulation states that

such students with cognitive difficulties may have difficulties with executive functions such as organizing and monitoring the environment. Therefore, students with learning disabilities may experience difficulties in managing their learning materials, creating a conducive learning environment, and reducing distractions, which may hinder their concentration and engagement in learning tasks (Wang et al., 2024).

The group of specific learning disorders is heterogeneous, it includes difficulties in reading, writing, mathematics and other educational subjects (Makauskienė, Ivoškuvienė, 2022). Specific learning disorders are determined by unevenly formed cognitive processes that do not reach the level of general achievements and competences. According to Gedutienė (2018), specific learning disorders include not only reading and writing disorders, but also other learning difficulties arising from them in a broader context. Most often, disorders are manifested by a lack of auditory and visual perception, memory and perception disorders.

Dyslexia. Reading disorders are called dyslexia. According to the International Dictionary of Words (2013), the concept of dyslexia is interpreted as a partial disorder of the ability to read, which is manifested by systematically repeating the same mistakes. According to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10-AM), this disorder is designated by R 48.0 code. Specific reading disorder - F 81.0. It is the most common learning disability. However, this disorder is not always detected at school. Its easier forms are not identified, and the learner still experiences difficulties in absorbing information while reading or comprehending the text being read. Moll et al. (2014) note that almost a fifth of the world's population experiences some or the other symptoms of reading disorders. According to Gedutienė (2018), reading disorders reduce the ability to correctly and fluently read single words and written information provided by the teacher, understand the essence and meaning of

the text, analyze and systematize data, which in general significantly complicates the learning process, assimilation of information, sharing with other students during lectures etc.

How to provide written information in the training process:

➤ Whenever possible, provide text assignments and other written information in a digital format so that students can use a variety of screen readers that can speak text and video content.

➤ When preparing reports or presentations, reduce the textual part of the information and replace it with pictures and diagrams. When presenting visualizations, re-emphasize what is most important.

➤ Don't overload slides with text. The extremely small text font and the abundance of text elements make the reading process difficult even for students who do not have a reading disorder.

➤ Increase the font of the text or create a contrast between the text and the visual information: changed colors, highlighted text elements, expanding the text helps to read written information more easily (Balevičienė et al., 2023).

Dyslexia often co-occurs with other specific learning disabilities, such as dysgraphia (writing difficulties). According to Makauskienė and Ivoškuvienė (2022), persons with reading disorders may also experience other learning disorders, for example: ADHD, auditory perception, memory, and writing disorders.

Dysgraphia. A writing disorder is called dysgraphia. Dysgraphia is characterized by irregular spelling (missing letters, confusion, etc.), difficulties in writing letters and other signs on the plane, illegible or hard to read handwriting, motor, coordination and cognitive development disorders (Makauskienė, Ivoškuvienė, 2022).

People with writing disorders experience a lot of learning difficulties when they have to write down and summarize the study material told by the teacher. During written settlements, preparing other written works.

The most common signs of writing disorders are:

- irregular word structure (missing letters, syllable or other errors);
- irregular form of letters, direction of writing, arrangement of text on the page;
- abundance of spelling and punctuation errors;
- difficulties in formulating thoughts in writing;
- impaired auditory perception, etc

How to present verbal information in the training process:

- For students who experience writing difficulties, collect test-like tasks during the settlement so that they can mark the correct answers instead of having to write them down;
- During lectures, offer to take notes using a computer or other digital device that converts spoken language into text;
- Spend more time on written work or reduce the amount of analogical tasks by making it possible to report orally.
- During lectures, spend more time discussing the topic under consideration, initiate work in groups, encourage speaking (Kielaitė, 2013).

Specific learning disabilities due to impaired memory.

Individuals who experience memory disorders in the learning process understand the information presented well enough, but face difficulties when they cannot remember it and reproduce it at the right time, for example, during an exam or other assessment (Kielaitė, 2013).

Memory disorders can be caused by many factors (experienced trauma or certain acquired diseases, other disorders), it is important to find out which - visual or auditory memory allows the learner to better accept the information presented and apply appropriate information presentation strategies.

A teacher who notices that one or another student is experiencing learning difficulties due to impaired memory should apply the following information presentation and memorization strategies:

- Assignments should be submitted orally and in writing, preferably with predetermined settlement dates (the provided subject study plan will make it easier to remember the most important assignments and their completion dates);

- Formulate more complex tasks and written works clearly, present the stages of task performance (Kielaitė, 2013);

- During lectures, "dose" the amount of information presented. After presenting the topic, reflect on the most important concepts and statements with the students.

- Do not apply mechanical learning, but alternative methods of information processing: give students creative tasks, problematic questions, encourage reasoning (Brėdikytė et al., 2010).

- Encourage students to process information in various ways, e.g.: turning verbal into graphic, graphic into verbal, creating concept maps, otherwise systematizing and creatively presenting what they learned during lectures (Balevičienė et al., 2023).

- Teach students strategies for memorizing information: listen carefully, learn to distinguish and note only the main, essential information, highlight or underline it in the text, create

glossaries of concepts, dates, other terms, so that it is easy to find and remember when necessary.

STUDY CONTENT AND MATERIALS

It is important to mention that only one third of disabilities are easily noticeable (usually they are physical: vision, hearing, movement, etc.). Two thirds of all disabilities are invisible. They include various disorders and difficulties, chronic diseases and other things that a person experiences, but it is difficult to notice those signs physically. It should be noted that a third of all disabilities are attributed to mental disorders, e.g. psychological illnesses, anxiety spectrum disorders, etc. (Balevičienė, Bikauskaitė, Baliūnas, 2023).

Creating accessible material takes time and additional resources. The instructor may need to learn new technologies and be creative in considering alternative ways to share information and/or enable students to participate in classes.

Presentation and interpretation of educational material according to students' abilities. The essence of effective teaching is the teacher's understanding of the material. However, subject knowledge, while necessary, is often not sufficient. Good teachers also understand what makes certain topics or concepts difficult for students and can explain those topics in a simple, understandable way. In addition, they are able to assess students' knowledge and experience, set reasonable expectations for student progress, select appropriate teaching methods and materials, devise examples and analogies to explain key points, relate one topic to another, and assess whether students learn what is taught. The clarity of instruction and appropriateness of activities influence student satisfaction more than the learning tool (Li and Xue, 2023).

Ensuring the availability of course materials one should consider:

- 1) teaching materials, handouts and presentations;
- 2) audio or video material used in the auditorium.

1. Course readings, handouts and presentation materials.

It is important to make the curriculum and course materials available to students as soon as possible so that students who may need more time can begin using the material. The most common strategy for increasing the accessibility of course texts (including all assigned readings, presentations, and handouts) is to provide readable versions. Most computers have built-in screen-reading technology, which essentially translates printed text into audible words that the user can listen to. This helps students who have specific learning disabilities, difficulty concentrating while reading, or who have better auditory memory than visual memory.

When preparing presentations and slides, it is important to pay attention to the arrangement of information on the slide, avoid a large amount of text. For text, choose fonts that are easy to read and widely used, e.g. *Arial*, *Calibri*, etc. (Balevičienė, Bikauskaitė, Baliūnas, 2023). Do not use a font size smaller than 30 pt (it will be difficult for the student to read the information presented when sitting in the back rows of a larger classroom). For printed text, do not use a text size smaller than 9 pt, it is best to use a font size of 12-16 pt, to highlight or underline more important concepts.

Visualize the information by presenting tables, diagrams, pictures or graphs, so that those students who experience reading or other specific learning disorders, have difficulty concentrating and maintaining attention will be able to understand the information.

2. Audio and video recordings.

Teachers are increasingly using audio and video materials in classrooms. It is preferable to have subtitles, especially if the text is not in Lithuanian. There are two types of technologies for making audio and video accessible.

Converting audio (or audio parts of videos) to **text** (e.g. closed subtitles) can be done using computer programs. Captioning videos increases accessibility for a variety of learners, including those with learning disabilities, literacy difficulties, hearing impairments, or second language learners.

Audio descriptions for visuals usually have to be created by a person in real time or using pre-recorded narration. Audio descriptions of videos increase accessibility for a variety of learners, including those with learning difficulties, literacy difficulties and visual impairments.

When teaching educational material during lectures, it is easier to maintain students' interest and learning motivation, as teachers are able to model the content of the presented material using different methods: telling stories, showing slide presentations, playing audio recordings, educational films, and initiating student work in groups. When organizing the study process, try to ensure the flexibility and diversity of teaching and learning methods so that all learners can receive information in the most acceptable way.

Summary: Every learner is unique and processes information differently. In the process of studying and learning, students often face various learning challenges, some of them experience specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, attention or memory disorders. In the scientific literature, more than one strategy is named to help a student with various learning needs receive and process information, how to make the study process accessible. Teachers are recommended to use flexible teaching methods, to present teaching materials

in various ways, using audio, visual and other means, to encourage students' critical thinking and creativity.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS FOR STRENGTHENING PSYCHOEMOTIONAL HEALTH

What is important to know?

Almost every teacher will tell you that they are stressed almost every day. Many are stressed by the fast pace of life, endless tension at work, and health getting worse. However, even a non-functioning multimedia remote control can cause stress. This is confirmed by the ongoing research conducted by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Reports from the agency suggest that stress at work will only increase over the next five years.

Self-efficacy and psychological adjustment

It is known that our thoughts, behavior and environment greatly influence our psychological well-being, so a positive atmosphere, positive actions and good feelings are necessary for happiness and psychological well-being. In this case, the lower a person's self-efficacy, the greater the chance of depression, anxiety, stress, addictions, and other negative consequences. Because depressed people tend to believe that they are less able to act effectively in important life situations than people who are not depressed. Anxiety and avoidant behavior are the result of a person's low self-efficacy, when too little efficiency does not help to control important and threatening situations. Therefore, as self-efficacy and self-control increase, emerging psychological problems may decrease (Maddux and Kleiman, 2020). This theory is supported by Fu, Liang, An, and Zhao's 2018 study, in which the authors aimed to examine the self-efficacy and psychological adjustment of nursing home residents in China, which included 307 residents. The results showed that satisfaction with the physical environment, social

support, positive engagement in social activities, and higher self-efficacy were positively related to psychological adjustment.

Self-efficacy and physical health

Good and strong physical health usually requires behavioral changes and a strong belief in self-efficacy. By strengthening a person's self-efficacy, the desire to change and start improving physical health increases, there is a greater motivation to exercise, follow a necessary diet, manage stress, reduce unhealthy life habits, adhere to treatment, etc. In addition, greater self-efficacy can improve biological processes, such as the immune system, which affects health. Because people with higher self-efficacy can have more control over their environment, feel less anxiety, which reduces susceptibility to infections or other illnesses (Maddux and Kleiman, 2020). This theory can be confirmed by a study conducted by Ory et al. in 2018, one of the objectives of which was to investigate the effect of self-efficacy on being more physically active. The results of this study revealed that participants reported that increased self-efficacy significantly increased physical activity and made physical activity easier. Therefore, the authors found that self-efficacy increases positive effects on physical health.

From the picture one can see that when a dysfunctional cycle begins, we move through negative thoughts and feelings to destructive behaviors that cause a negative outcome.

And positive thoughts lead to positive feelings, which create more constructive behavior, which is characteristic of a functional cycle rather than a dysfunctional cycle.

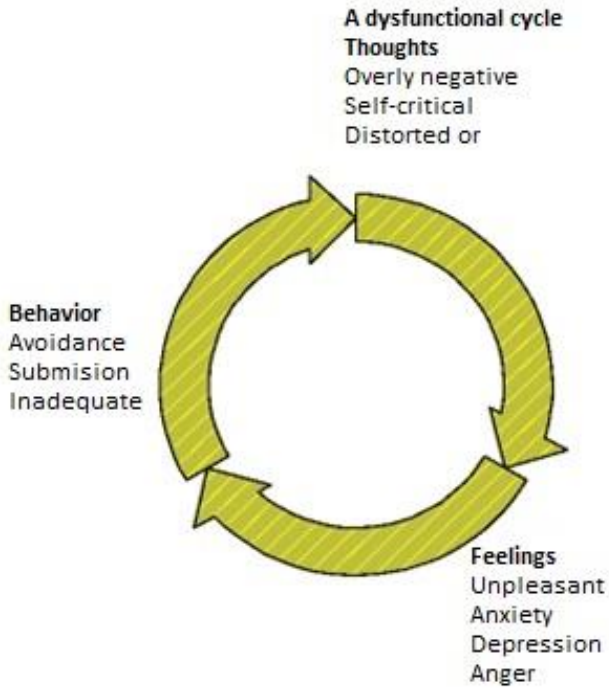


Figure 5.1. Dysfunctional cycle (adapted from Stallard, 2010)

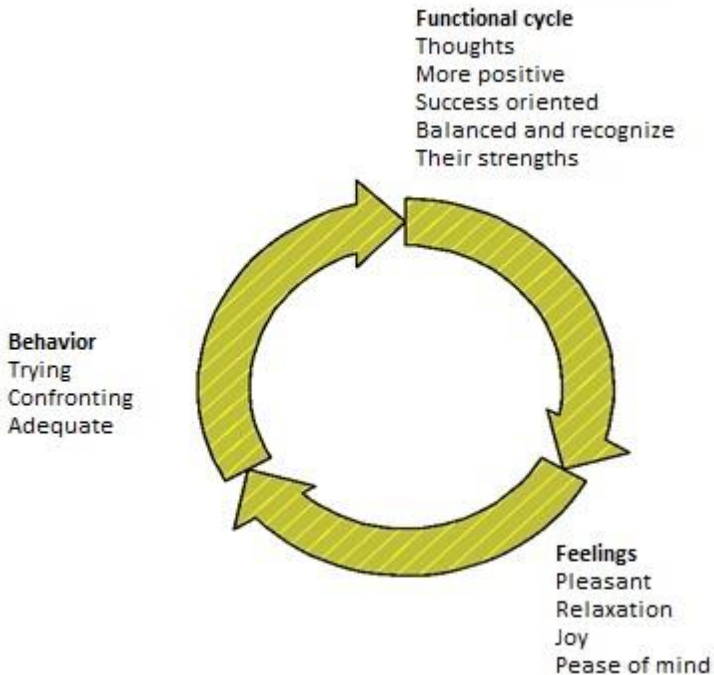


Figure 5.2. Functional Cycle (adapted from Stallard, 2010)

**ADVICE FOR TEACHERS, LEARNING
INSTITUTIONS, TO IMPLEMENT STRESS
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES IN THE INSTITUTION,
IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

In order to help students cope with stress during studies, teachers and educational institutions can offer various measures to individual students (Health promotion, 2024):

➤ **Writing Center**

A writing center would provide free one-on-one consultations with professionally trained writing consultants, one-on-one advice and feedback, and save time needed for

writing and presentation projects. Currently, the Dyslexia Center in Lithuania performs this function.

➤ **Grade Change Program**

This program would allow degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students to retake a course in which they received a low grade to improve their overall average grade.

➤ **Services for persons with disabilities**

The Office of Disability Affairs would provide appropriate academic accommodations, support, and other services to students with disabilities. They would also hold free seminars.

➤ **Counseling and psychological services**

Free consultations could be provided, to help understand issues, find solutions, and provide information on additional resources. Currently, every higher education institution has the opportunity to provide psychological support services to students, teachers and the entire community.

➤ **Seminars**

Counseling services could offer free group workshops that can help you learn how to manage anxiety, develop coping skills, take a break and make meaningful changes in your life.

➤ **Sports spaces**

Physical activity is a great way to take a break from studying and manage the stress of final exams.

➤ **Supervision**

Supervision helps professionals better understand their professional roles, responsibilities and challenges.

TEACHERS HELP THEMSELVES AND THE STUDENTS IN MANAGING STRESS, ANXIETY

Stress and anxiety are an inevitable part of life, but studies have shown that due to increased daily stress, college-aged youth are at greater risk of developing stress than other age groups (Scott, 2023).

Students often admit that they need to reduce stress. However, with all the activities and responsibilities that fill a student's schedule, it is sometimes difficult to find time to try new stress-relieving tools to help diffuse stress (Scott, 2023).

Below are some commonly recommended stress management techniques that instructors can offer students, encourage them to learn stress management techniques while learning, or instructors themselves can use to relieve stress, anxiety, or burnout:

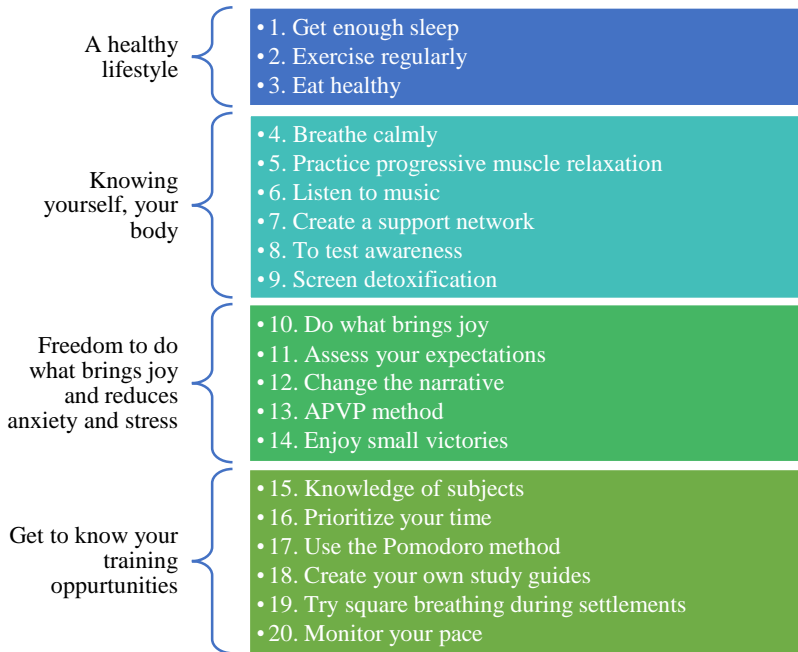


Figure 5.3. Stress management techniques (adapted from Health promotion, 2024; Kumar, 2024; Sekher, 2024; Scott, 2024)

Stress management methods:

- 1. Get enough sleep.**
- 2. Exercise regularly.**
- 3. Healthy eating.**
- 4. Breathe calmly.**
- 5. Practice progressive muscle relaxation.**
- 6. Listen to music.**
- 7. Create a support network.**

Asking for help can be difficult, even when we know we may need it. But it is important to remember that friends, family,

peers, and teachers all want students to succeed. Most importantly, you do not have to figure it all out yourself. Instead, you can try to apply for support. This could be talking to a lecturer or using university resources (Health Promotion 2024).

8. Try mindfulness (mindfulness method) (Scott, 2023).

Develop mindfulness techniques to remain calm and composed during an exam or assessment, which will allow you to think clearly and make accurate decisions under pressure. That is, to master the art of combining speed and accuracy (Kumar, 2024).

9. Screen detox (Sekhar, 2024).

The digital world is always in front of us, from phones to laptops to TV screens. It often seems impossible to escape.

It is even more overwhelming when you use technology to help you learn. When trying to concentrate, it is easy to get distracted by social media or other more entertaining apps (Sekhar, 2024).

Technology can increase exam stress for many students, therefore a screen detox would help reduce its impact. A digital detox can also improve sleep and mental health, allow more time for quality relationships, and increase productivity. The ideal scenario is a few days in nature, away from all screens, to relax, read and reflect (Sekhar, 2024).

However, it is not available to everyone. Personal workload or commitments may require you to stay in touch. You can start with an hour a day without your phone, sitting in a quiet place. You can meditate, read or even learn new skills. There are other habits, that can be developed to reduce the stress associated with screen time, such as:

- Disconnect from the power grid before going to bed.

- Set screen time limits for yourself.
- Turn off notifications.
- Create screen-free spaces at home.
- Take a break from the screen by taking a walk.
- Make digital detox a challenge and/or a game to make the idea seem more interesting (Sekhar, 2024).

10. Doing what brings joy (Sekhar, 2024).

The main problem with this advice is that it is vague. As a young student, they are still figuring out who they are and what their interests are. But a good place to start is to make a list of things you like to do and a list of things you would like to try. Taking a break from your busy study schedule to try something new or take up a hobby can give your brain a chance to recover (Sekhar, 2024), for example:

- Learn new skills with YouTube;
- Go to the cinema to watch a movie;
- Take a walk in your favorite park;
- Call a close friend or family member and talk about life;
- Join a new club or society;
- Try dance lessons (Sekhar, 2024).

11. Assess your expectations (Health Promotion, 2024)

We all want to do well in college or university. But it is important to remember that there is only so much you can do with the resources, time, energy and support you have. For example, it may not be realistic to expect to ace every exam or nail every presentation.

For help with assessing expectations, here are some questions to ask yourself (or the student):

- Are my expectations realistic?
- Where can these expectations come from?
- Are my expectations affecting other areas of my life (e.g. mental health, friendships, etc.)?
- Is it something I will feel strongly about a week, a month, or a year from now?
- What would good "enough" look like to me?
- How can I adjust my expectations to be more reasonable?
- Where can I go for additional support? (Health Promotion, 2024)

12. Changing the Narrative (Health Promotion, 2024)

You may not realize it, but the way we talk to ourselves can help (or hinder) our progress in overcoming stress. For example, you might find yourself saying things like, "Ugh, I have to do this task faster or I'm going to fail."

This self-talk can cause you to feel even more stressed or feel pressured to perform a task in a way that may not help you achieve your goals. Try to notice the moments when we are self-critical and encourage yourself to take a softer approach. For example, you could say something like, "I can find time to finish this later." (Health Promotion, 2024)

13. HALT method (Health Promotion, 2024)

One way to do this is to use the HALT method to make sure we are meeting our most important needs right now.

- H: Am I hungry?
- A: Am I angry?

- L: Am I lonely?

- T: Am I tired? (Health Promotion, 2024)

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it is time to address that specific need. When our basic needs are not met, it can be even more difficult to concentrate, learn or interact with others (Health Promotion, 2024).

14. Enjoy small victories

Although it may seem silly, take the time to celebrate small (or unconventional) victories and achievements. For example, you can be happy that you finished preparing the study guide, finished quoting quotes, or managed to prepare half of the presentation. Taking the time to acknowledge, appreciate, and celebrate your efforts can help you stay motivated to achieve results (Health Promotion, 2024).

15. Knowledge of Subjects (Kumar, 2024)

Strengthen your subject knowledge through rigorous study and practice. Strong fundamentals will increase both speed and accuracy (Kumar, 2024).

16. Prioritize your time (Health/Wellness services, 2010)

Are some lectures more difficult than others? Prioritize your time to cover the most important or time-consuming items.

➤ It may be helpful to start by writing down a rough list of each upcoming assignment, due date, and exam date.

➤ Then divide the list according to deadlines and how long each task might take. If you are feeling overwhelmed with all the things you have to do in the coming week, start by setting your top three priorities.

➤ Now that you know which tasks you want to do first, schedule time to study or work on them.

➤ Try using a planner, phone calendar, or to-do app to keep things organized.

Remember that prioritizing time can also mean prioritizing things like sleep, regular meals, breaks, and spending time enjoying the last week on campus before vacation (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

17. Use the Pomodoro method (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

The Pomodoro Technique can help you space out your time and take meaningful breaks to help retain information.

Here is how to do it:

- Choose the task, topic or study guide you want to tackle.
- Set a timer for 25 minutes and focus only on that task, then take a 5 minute break.
- Repeat this cycle three more times (25 minutes of learning, 5 minutes of breaks).
- When the fourth break comes, extend the time to 20 or 30 minutes.

If necessary, this method can be repeated several times a day.

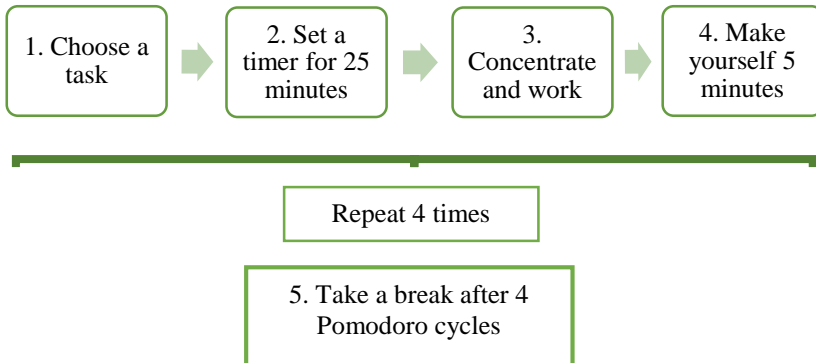


Figure 5.4. Pomodoro technique for managing stress, anxiety (adapted from Bhatnagar, 2024)

This method can help you work more efficiently, as taking breaks from studying often helps maintain concentration and energy levels. In addition, breaks are provided to poor water, enjoy food, chat with friends or take a walk (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

The Pomodoro technique is perfect for both teachers and students as it eases the psychological burden by breaking large teaching and learning tasks into manageable intervals; makes training effective; helps fight distraction; applying structural breaks to absorb information; allows for a healthy balance between concentration and relaxation.

18. Create your own study guides

➤ Choose a topic that may be in the test and create five to ten problems or questions related to that topic. Questions or problems from past quizzes, exams, presentation slides or homework assignments can also be used.

➤ Do this with each important part of the material and see if all the questions can be answered.

➤ Work with someone in your group to come up with questions, quiz each other or create a joint study guide (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

19. During settlements (or in case of severe stress, anxiety), try square breathing (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

While waiting for the test to begin, do a quick controlled breathing exercise or meditation. You can watch a video or use the square breathing technique described below. It is important to remember that this technique can also be used during the exam if you start to feel anxious or stressed.

- Inhale slowly through the nose for four seconds.
- Hold your breath for four seconds.
- Exhale slowly through the mouth for four seconds.
- Hold the exhalation for four seconds.

Practice this technique throughout the day to remember the steps. It is good to repeat as many times as necessary. If you start to feel dizzy, try to breathe more slowly.

20. Monitor your pace (during settlements, anxiety, stress) (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

Try to keep track of how much time is allocated to each question and how much time is left to set yourself a good pace for the exam. This can help determine how much time is available for each remaining question.

Here are some more tips to help a teacher help a student deal with stress:

➤ If you encounter a specific question, skip it for now and come back to it later. This will help you stay on track and not spend too much time on one question.

➤ You can also think of the exam as a guideline. For example, you might want to set a goal to go halfway as soon as the time is halfway up.

➤ If possible, give yourself enough time to revise your answers before the end of the exam time. This will help you spot mistakes or answer questions you may have missed before (Health/Wellness services, 2010).

PREPARING FOR PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER ORAL ACCOUNTS: MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

Preparing for presentations and other oral presentations is an important skill needed to ensure a successful presentation of the work done (Liu et al., 2023). In order to minimize stress or anxiety, here are some techniques to help manage negative feelings and emotions.



Figure 5.5. Managing stress and anxiety before settlements (adapted from Park et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2023; Li et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022; Asnaani et al., 2020; Hartson et al., 2023)

1. Thorough preparation (Park et al., 2020)

Description: Good preparation includes learning the content of the presentation in detail, preparing the slides, highlighting the most important points. It is important to know your material so well that you can speak freely without hints. Strengths: Self-confidence, clarity, ability to answer questions.

2. Practice (Liu et al., 2023)

Description: Rehearsal in front of a mirror, recording yourself or practicing in front of friends and family. This helps you better visualize how you will look and sound to your audience. Advantages: Better speaking technique, improvement of body language, feeling of naturalness.

3. Breathing techniques (Li et al., 2020)

Description: Deep breathing exercises help reduce physiological stress. For example, diaphragmatic breathing or the 4-7-8 technique (inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds). Benefits: Reduces the level of stress hormones, calms the nervous system.

4. Visualization (Li et al., 2022)

Description: Visualize yourself successfully presenting your material. Visualize all parts of the presentation in detail, from start to finish. Benefits: Increases self-confidence, reduces anxiety.

5. Positive thinking (Hartson et al., 2023)

Description: Focus on positive thoughts about your abilities and performance. Affirmations such as "I can do this" or "I am well prepared" can help. Benefits: Increases self-esteem, reduces anxiety.

6. Knowing your audience (Asnaani et al., 2020)

Description: Find out who your audience will be. This can help them better understand what information is important to them and how to do it effectively. Advantages: Better interaction with the audience, less anxiety about reactions.

7. Relaxation techniques (Hartson et al., 2023)

Description: Exercises such as yoga, meditation or progressive muscle relaxation can help calm your mind and body before an important presentation. Advantages: Reduces physical and psychological stress, improves concentration.

8. Time management (Park et al., 2020)

Description: Make sure you have enough time to prepare and review the material. Do not put off getting ready until the

last minute. Advantages: Reduces stress due to lack of time, better quality of material absorption.

9. Adequate nutrition and rest before billing (Li et al., 2020)

Description: Before the presentation, it is important to rest well and eat a balanced diet so that you have enough energy and do not feel exhausted. Benefits: Improves physical and mental condition, increases attentiveness and endurance.

Using these techniques, you can significantly reduce the stress and anxiety associated with presentations and other oral presentations and ensure a successful performance.

You can find methods for performing anxiety and stress relief actions in the appendices section of this publication (*Appendix No. 1*).

Conclusion: Teachers experience daily stress due to fast pace of life and work pressure. Developing self-efficacy is important because it helps manage stress and improves psychological and physical health. Universities can help students and faculty by offering writing centers, grade change programs, disability services, psychological support, sports spaces, and workshops that teach stress management techniques. In order for teachers to be able to manage anxiety, stress and negative emotions, it is recommended to apply methodologies that improve psycho-emotional health.

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APPENDIX

Appendix No. 1

EXERCISES FOR STRESS AND ANXIETY MANAGEMENT, FOR INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION

Stress and anxiety are often an unavoidable part of our daily lives, but it is important to discover tools to manage them effectively. Managing stress and anxiety can help us maintain emotional balance, improve mental health, and build resilience to the challenges we face.

One effective strategy for managing stress and anxiety is to use a variety of tasks and practices that help reduce tension, relax tense muscles, and "soften" the mind. These tasks can range from breathing exercises to incorporating physical activity or creative activities.

This section discusses various tasks that are designed to manage stress and anxiety. Practices ranging from healing scents and meditation to physical activity and enhancing social connection are explored in detail to help you create a healthy and resilient stress management plan.

Choosing and regularly practicing the right tasks to manage stress and anxiety can improve your quality of life, increase emotional resilience and promote mental health.

These tasks can be applied to both the teacher and the learner.

Task No. 1

Healing scent or meditation

This exercise involves conscious breathing and various meditation techniques.

Description:

- **Goal Setting:** Set a goal for yourself to spend at least 10-15 minutes each day on therapeutic scent and deep breathing.

- **Choosing a place:** Find a calming place where you can do this task. It can be your bedroom, a comfortable corner of a chair or a blanket, or a creation of nature, such as a park or garden.

- **Timing:** Choose a specific time of the day or evening when it is most convenient for you to complete this task. This can be in the morning as a morning meditation, at midday to unwind from stressful writing or work sessions, or in the evening before going to bed.

- **Start Ritual:** Before starting a task, create a ritual to help you release tension and prepare for relaxation. This can be a short meditation or an exercise to relax the body.

- **Choosing a healing scent:** Choose a scent that suits you best and has a calming effect. These can be essential oils such as lavender, chamomile, mint or eucalyptus, or natural ingredients such as lemon, ginger or rosemary.

- **Breathing Technique:** Sit comfortably and take a deep breath in through your nose for a count of four, and then slowly exhale through your mouth for a count of four. Repeat this process several times, trying to concentrate on the movements of inhalation and exhalation.

- **Meditation or relaxation exercise:** Choose a meditation or relaxation exercise that you enjoy and that helps reduce stress and tension. This can be a simple meditation on the smell or a body relaxation exercise where you relax each part of the body in turn.

- **Wrap Up:** After 10-15 minutes wrap up, slowly return to your daily life. Try to assess how you feel after completing the task and notice any changes in your body or mental state.

- Consistency and follow-up: Try to practice this exercise regularly so that it becomes a habit in your daily stress management. Observe how it affects your overall well-being and stress level and change the task based on need or experience.

Task No. 2

Diary

Write down your thoughts, feelings and events in a diary every day. It can help you understand the sources of stress, find out what factors are affecting you, and express your feelings and thoughts, helping you find ways to manage your stress.

Description:

- Goal Setting: Decide to journal some time each day or regularly to express your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- Choosing a place: Find a quiet and cozy corner in your home or country where you can create a pleasant writing space for yourself. It can be your bedroom, your home library or your favorite coffee shop.
- Time selection: Choose a specific hour of the day or evening when it is most convenient for you to engage in blogging. It can be in the morning to start the day by clarifying your thoughts, or in the evening to unwind after a busy day.
- Beginning Ritual: Before you start writing, create a ritual to help you relax and prepare to express your thoughts. This can be a short meditation or an exercise to relax the body.
- Writing topics: Write about what is important to you - it can be your day's events, feelings, thoughts or even future plans. Nevertheless, try to be honest and open with yourself.
- Writing style: Write freely and without censorship. Do not judge your thoughts or feelings, just let them flow freely onto the paper.

- **Reflection and analysis:** After you finish writing, read what you wrote and reflect. Observe how you feel when reading your posts and analyze your thoughts and feelings.

- **Accountability:** Journaling can be a therapeutic way to express your feelings and cope with difficulties. Regardless, share with a close friend or therapist if you want additional support and perspective.

- **Consistency and tracking:** Try to journal regularly to make it a daily stress management habit. Observe how it affects your overall well-being and stress levels, and change your writing topics or methods as needed or experienced.

Task No. 3

Time management techniques

Create a schedule for your daily tasks and plan your time so that it is used efficiently. This will help reduce the feeling of being overloaded with work or responsibilities and allow you to manage your time more effectively, reducing pressure.

Description:

- **Goal Setting:** Decide to set aside time each week to create and plan your weekly schedule. The goal is to create a clear and structured plan that will help you manage your time more effectively and reduce your stress levels.

- **Choosing a location:** Find a quiet and suitable place where you can sit and mindfully create your schedule. It can be your work desk, home kitchen or anywhere else where you feel comfortable and focused.

- **Timing:** Choose a good time at the beginning or end of the week when you have more time and energy to focus on creating your schedule.

- **Start Ritual:** Before you start creating your schedule, create a ritual that will help you get rid of any challenges and prepare for focused work. This can be a short breathing exercise or meditation.

- **Weekly planning:** Using a calendar or planning tools, identify your most important commitments and tasks for each day of the week. Write down and determine when you will work, when you will do housework, exercise, and relax.

- **Prioritization:** Set aside time for the most important tasks and commitments. Determine which tasks will give you more time and energy and prioritize them in your schedule.

- **Flexibility and backup plans:** Be flexible and take into account unplanned events that may change your plans. Leave a few free hours in your schedule for backup plans or urgent tasks.

- **Reflection and analysis:** After the end of the week, review your schedule, evaluate how you managed to stick to it and what you could improve for the coming week. Try to understand where the difficulties were and how you can overcome them.

- **Consistency and follow-through:** Try to regularly create and stick to your weekly schedule so that it becomes a daily habit. Observe how it affects your overall well-being and stress levels, and adjust your schedule as needed and experienced.

Task No. 4

Creative activity

Look for an activity that gives you pleasure and in which you can immerse yourself with all your powers. This could be creating art, writing, listening to or creating music, gardening, or any other activity that you enjoy and find relaxing.

Description:

– Goal Setting: Decide to devote at least an hour each day or regularly to creative work. The goal is to allow yourself the freedom to create and express yourself through writing or creating art to reduce stress and encourage creativity.

– Choosing a place: Find a quiet and stimulating corner in your home or go out into nature, where you can feel motivated and inspired to create. It can be your studio, desk, park or beach.

– Timing: Choose a time when you are most inspired and feel energized to create. This can be in the morning, when your mind is still pure and open, or in the evening, when you are more relaxed and settled.

– Initiation Ritual: Before you start creating, create a ritual that helps you move from your daily routine into a state of creative flow. This can be a short meditation, a breathing exercise, or an inhalation and exhalation session.

– Creative Topics: Select or select a creative topic or project that you would like to focus on. It can be poetry, prose, artwork, photography, or any creative project that you like and that fits your interests.

– Flow of the creative process: Let your thoughts flow freely and do not try to limit your ideas too much. Nevertheless, try to keep the flow of creative activity and create continuously without being overly critical of yourself.

– Perseverance and effort: Strive to produce and maintain creative work regularly, even if you sometimes feel uninspired or less than perfect. The key is to create and allow yourself to express yourself rather than striving for perfection or judging yourself too harshly.

– Reflection and analysis: After the creative session, go through your work and do an analysis. Observe how you feel during creation and evaluate your creative process. Notice what

feelings you experience while creating and what you learn about yourself.

– Consistency and follow-up: Try to create and stick to your creative work regularly so that it becomes a daily habit. Observe how it affects your overall well-being and stress levels, and modify your creative process as needed or experienced.

Task No. 5

Learning to solve and analyze problems

Learn to solve problems effectively so you can reduce the stress they cause. This can include identifying problems, analyzing their causes and making effective solutions.

Description:

- **Goal Setting:** Decide to set aside some time each day or week to learn problem analysis and problem solving strategies. The goal is to acquire the skills to solve problems effectively and reduce the level of stress associated with challenges.

- **Location:** Find a quiet and motivating place to focus and learn problem solving. It can be your study, your desk, or anywhere else where you feel comfortable and focused.

- **Timing:** Choose a time when you feel most motivated and conscious so that you can concentrate on studying. It can be in the morning, before starting work, or in the evening, before going to bed.

- **Start Ritual:** Before you start studying, create a ritual to help you switch your mind and prepare for learning. This can be a short meditation, a body relaxation exercise or a breathing technique.

- **Learning material:** Choose a problem or situation that you would like to face and learn how to solve it. This could be a

personal or work situation you are dealing with or just a fictional scenario.

- **Analytical process:** Analyze the chosen problem or situation in detail. Identify its main causes, challenges and possible solutions. Using logic and analytical thinking, try to figure out all the important details.

- **Solution Strategies:** Based on your analysis, come up with several possible solutions. Evaluate each solution option, their advantages and disadvantages and potential impact.

- **Decision implementation:** Choose one solution option and take steps to implement it. Be ready to adapt and change your plans according to the changing situation.

- **Analysis of the results:** After the implementation of the decision, evaluate the obtained results. Observe whether the chosen solution was effective and how it affected the situation. Develop the habit of learning from your experiences and improving your problem-solving skills.

- **Consistency and observation:** Try to regularly learn to solve problems and analyze situations so that it becomes your daily habit. Observe how it affects your overall well-being and stress levels, and modify your learning methodology as needed and experienced.

Task No. 6

Task plan to increase your self-esteem:

- Identify your strengths and weaknesses:
 - Assess your abilities, interests, and skills.
 - Identify the areas in which you are strong and those in which you would like to improve.
- Set goals for yourself:

- Create realistic and achievable goals for your life.
- Break big goals down into smaller parts and identify specific actions that will help you achieve them.
- Learn continuously:
 - Continue self-education and personal development.
 - Spend time reading, learning new skills, taking courses or seminars that interest you.
- Take care of yourself:
 - Take time for your physical health, exercise, eat healthy and get enough sleep.
 - Take care of your psychological health, find a balance between work, rest and entertainment.
- Pursue collaboration and communication skills:
 - Direct and clear communication helps you achieve your goals and improves your relationships with others.
 - By learning to communicate effectively, you can get more support and encouragement from others.
- Accept challenges and trials:
 - Do not be afraid of new experiences and challenges, because they help you improve and grow.
 - Experiences of success and trials help to strengthen your self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Be positive about yourself:
 - Every day, name at least one thing that you are grateful for or that you have achieved.

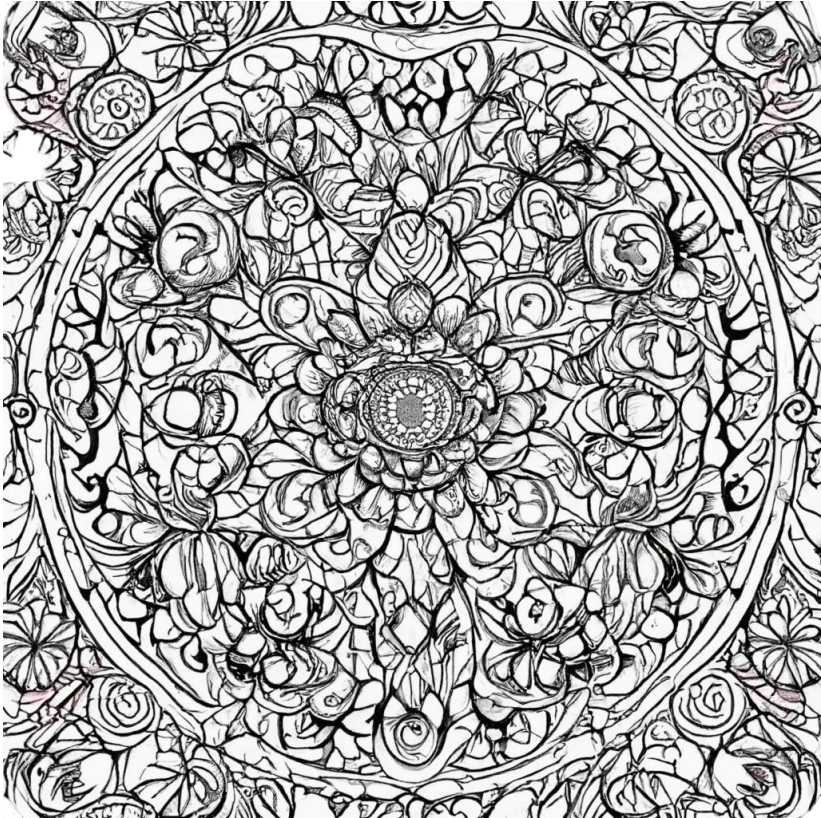
- Learn to be kind to yourself, appreciate your efforts and see yourself as a valuable person.
- Take care of your appearance and environment:
 - Dress in a way that makes you feel comfortable and confident.
 - Organize your space, both in your body and at home, so that it reflects your well-being and self-worth.
- Create and nurture social connections:
 - Connect with people you value and who encourage you.
 - Participate in various events and activities to expand your social circle and achieve your goals.
- Don't forget to relax and have fun:
 - It is important not only to work, but also to relax and enjoy life.
 - Find activities that are enjoyable and relaxing and spend time on these activities.

Taking these steps will help you build your self-esteem and confidence. The most important thing is to strive for improvement every day and to look positively at your growth process.

Task No. 8

Color a mandala that will relieve stress, anxiety, and increase motivation for work.

Mandala is created by the developers of the project using the Mandala app MandalaApp.



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONING THE SOCARTIC METHOD

To understand the problem:

- What does that mean to you?
- If that happens, what would be wrong with that?

To find exceptions:

- What things are wrong with this situation/approach?
- Have you experienced a similar situation before? What was different?

To reflect or summarize:

- Am I right in thinking that... .
- So when you feel X, you think Y, and do Z?

To find the solution:

- What would you do differently next time?
- More examples of Socratic questioning:
 - What are you thinking about right now and how much do you believe in it?
 - What makes you believe this idea?
 - What is against this thought (assessment)?
 - How might other people see this situation?
 - What advice would you give to someone in this situation?
 - What could be the alternative thoughts?

- What facts or information would support these alternative thoughts?
- What errors in your thinking that we have named can you name?
- How does this mindset help or hinder your goals?
- How would things change if you believed in alternative thoughts?
- What's the worst that could happen?
- How could it be handled then?
- Could this situation be changed (improved) in any way?
- What could I do differently?

Information sources (APPENDICES)

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Online links

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