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**Staff & Faculty Consultation Center**

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF****

**Self-Care Strategies**

During times of unusual or extreme stress, it can be difficult to keep yourself and your family members from feeling the impact. The following strategies have been shown to help people weather difficult times and “bounce back” more easily.

**Pay Attention**

Notice how your body is reacting. See if there are physical sensations that let you know how you feel. You can take action steps if you are aware of what you are experiencing.

**Breathe** Take some slow, deep breaths. Give yourself the time to let air fill your lungs completely and then let it out.

**Talk** Share your thoughts and feelings with supportive people. Find moments to talk with family, friends, and coworkers who are good listeners.

**Write** Jot down some of your reactions to what you have experienced to share with other people or to keep for yourself. If you have trouble sleeping, it may help to write.

**Exercise** Engage is some physical activity, even if it is just a walk in the neighborhood with a family member or friend. Exercise can reduce tension and enhance your outlook. Some people prefer strenuous exercise such as jogging, bicycling, and aerobics, while others regenerate with yoga, stretching, and massage.

**Eat Healthy Food** Make a point to eat nutritious food regularly, even if meals don’t appeal to you. You’ll need to maintain your energy level to feel better.

**Avoid Mood-Altering Substances** Resist the temptation to “zone out” with alcohol and drugs, which may give short-term relief, but ultimately increase stress. Stimulants such as caffeinated sodas, coffee, teas, and nicotine can heighten tension. Even sugar interferes with sleep for some people. Drink lots of water instead.

**Relax** Take time for activities that you consider fun and nourishing. Whatever helps you to slow down and clear your head is helpful. Pastimes such as hot baths, music, art, puzzles, favorite shows, and time with pets can be beneficial.

**For additional information and resources, or to schedule an appointment please call the Caltech Staff and Faculty Center at (626) 395-8360 or email** **sfcc@caltech.edu**