

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered the landscape of education globally and has caused us to make significant changes to our daily lives. And for those of you whose loved ones may become afflicted with the virus, the impact of the pandemic is even more significant. Depending on your proximity to the illness, you may experience varying degrees of discomfort that impact many aspects of your wellness. This discomfort may, in turn, affect your academic performance. Please note that what you may experience is a normal response to a deeply distressing situation with unpredictable and uncontrollable features. With this document, we provide general guidance for optimizing learning during the period of remote instruction and offer advice on ways to support individual and collective flourishing and well-being.

You can find up-to-date details about the University's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

This guidance is not intended to be a substitute for medical or psychological services. Detailed information about referring a student to professional services is found below.

SECTION 1: ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The following information has been adapted from the "PSU Student Guide for Remote Learning."

Quick Tips

1. Designate one space in your house for classes, classwork, and studying. Preferably somewhere quiet, free of distractions, and with good internet access.
2. Use a wired connection if possible to improve internet speed and connection.
3. Hold yourself accountable: Set goals for yourself and check on progress weekly.
4. Practice self-management: Create a daily/weekly schedule and stick to it.
5. Figure out how you learn best: Do you work best at a certain time of day? Are you a visual or auditory learner? Maybe you'll want to print out slides or listen to audio recordings of class sessions.
6. Actively participate: Engage in virtual classes by asking questions, responding to online forums, and connecting with classmates.
7. Ask for help when you need it (see the resource list in this document).

Staying organized

Staying organized at Sewanee probably looks a little different from staying organized while at home. Here are some things you might want to track for each class:

- Dates, times, and login information for virtual classes (consider using Google Classroom).
- Assignments
 - Are assignments changing as a result of remote learning? If so, how?
 - Are due dates changing?
 - Has the instructor changed the assignment submission process?
- What should you do if you need help?
 - Are virtual office hours being offered?
 - Is there an online forum to ask questions?
 - Reach out to your instructor via email or phone (if applicable).

One example of a way you could keep track:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Important Dates	Final exam X	Paper due X	Project due X
Assignment Changes	No lab	Discussion and video lecture	Paper instead of group project
Important Links	Zoom link Office hours	Blackboard link Office hours	Zoom link Office hours

Avoiding multitasking

Multitasking increases the chances of making mistakes and missing important information and cues; multitaskers are also less likely to retain information in working memory, which can hinder problem solving and creativity (Moore, 2012).

- What to do instead:
 - Focus on one thing at a time.
 - Take breaks between tasks. Incorporate movement into these breaks (i.e. stretching or walking around the house).

Making the most of your classes

A few tips:

- Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can—staying on schedule will help you have feelings of normalcy and prevent you from falling behind.
- Find out how to ask questions.
- Close distracting tabs and apps. There are programs on your phone and computer that will act as barriers to limit your ability to multitask.
- Continue taking notes as you would if you were there in person—handwritten notes especially can improve retention.
- Watch recordings at normal speed. Research shows that speeding up playback can lower your retention of material presented in classes.

Setting a schedule

As the situation unfolds, you may have fewer social commitments, group meetings, or work hours. Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like Google Calendar or a free printable template to organize your time. Include time for exercise and self-care.

If you are living with others and managing limited space, consider sharing your proposed schedule with them so you can all coordinate your needs.

Trading old strategies for new ones

Your routines may need to be adjusted during this time. Look for ways to adapt and possibly even improve habits or form new ones.

For example:

- Studying by yourself in a quiet space (as opposed to a loud/busy library or coffee shop like duPont or Stirling's) may improve your retention and academic success.
- If you normally study in groups, try a virtual study session with peers.
- Prove your mastery of a certain topic by organizing a Zoom session where you teach the topic to your peers.

Working with a group or team

- Try not to procrastinate.
- Meet regularly.
- Set a purpose for meetings, and collaborate on the notes.
- Check on one another and ask for support.

Staying connected to other people

Regular connection and social support (virtually) are important components of healthy coping, and checking in with instructors, classmates, and teammates during this time is important.

SECTION 2: TIPS TO “BE WELL” DURING COVID-19

During these uncertain times, it can be difficult to establish routines and stay motivated. Below is a list of resources, tools, and strategies to help you prioritize your well-being, connect with others, and stay productive while practicing effective social distancing.

The following tips were compiled by Sewanee Assistant Professor of Psychology Katie Nelson-Coffey, who wrote a great article for *Psychology Today* about “Staying Happy While Social Distancing.” You can read the full article [here](#).

Establish a routine

Establishing a routine will help improve motivation and productivity, and may even contribute to a greater sense of meaning in life (Heintzelman & King, 2019).

- Go to bed and wake up on your typical schedule.
- Eat regular meals at regular intervals.
- Set a class/work routine.

Move your body

Exercise is hugely important for both your physical and mental well-being. Take time every day to prioritize some kind of movement—better yet if you're able to do it outside!

- Go for a walk outdoors.
- Do a 30-minute virtual group workout class.
- Do a low-intensity stretch.

Practice self-compassion

Be kind to yourself. Approach this time of uncertainty non-judgmentally and with kindness. Self-compassion includes:

- Practicing understanding toward oneself rather than criticism.
- Recognizing failure as a part of the human experience.
- Being mindful of painful thoughts and feelings rather than overidentifying with them.

Express gratitude

Even in the midst of a crisis, we can almost always think of things that we're grateful for. Research suggests that expressing gratitude can help shift your focus and lessen worries, enhance positive emotions, and strengthen close relationships.

- Write down at least three things you're grateful for every day.
- Write and deliver a (virtual) letter or phone call to someone expressing your gratitude.

Be kind and compassionate to others

This is an extremely powerful exercise. The world is in desperate need of our kindness and compassion, and we have many opportunities to show it.

- Offer to order or pick up supplies for a loved one who is vulnerable.
- Lend emotional support to a friend who is a healthcare worker.
- Leave a big tip at a take-out restaurant.
- Buy a gift card for a local business.
- Continue practicing safe social distancing.

Seek opportunities to connect

Now, more than ever, we should seek new opportunities to connect with peers, friends, and family. Get creative with this!

- Schedule weekly check-ins with peers, friends, and mentors.
- Hold virtual game nights with friends.
- Spend quality time with your family at home.

Take a break

Schedule regular breaks throughout your day to rest and recharge.

- Set an alarm to remind you to stand up or walk around every hour.
- Spend at least 30 minutes a day doing an activity you enjoy (cooking/baking, crafting, reading, meditating, exercising, etc.).
- Take breaks from mindless media consumption.

Additional resources for positive activities

There are many activities that can enhance your well-being during this time.

- [Strategies to Thrive in Uncertain Times: Free Webinars](#)
- [Discover the Power of Self-Compassion: Free Classes](#)
- [Greater Good Magazine](#)
- [The Science of Well-Being: Free Class](#)
- [Positive Psychology Exercises](#)

Section 3: Departmental Response to COVID-19

[University Wellness Center COVID-19 response](#)

[Academic resources during COVID-19](#)

[University Registrar COVID-19 response](#)

[Easter 2020 withdrawal request](#)

[Jessie Ball duPont Library COVID-19 response](#)

SECTION 4: NATIONAL SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Internet Connection & Access

Information on companies offering free/inexpensive hotspot or internet activation can be found [here](#).

- [Comcast COVID-19 response](#)
- [Charter free internet offer for 2 months](#)
- [AT&T COVID-19 response](#)
- [Sprint COVID-19 response](#)
- [T-Mobile COVID-19 response](#)
- [How to set up a personal hotspot on your iPhone or iPad](#)
- [How to set up a personal hotspot on an Android phone](#)

CAMPUS & NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

University Wellness Center

Email: uwc@sewanee.edu

During office hours: 931.598.1325

After-hours crisis line: 931.598.1700

Chaplain's Office

Email: chaplain@sewanee.edu

Dean of Students Office

Email: dstudent@sewanee.edu

National Resources

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Trevor Lifeline (support for LGBTQIAA youth):

1.866.488.7386

Steve Fund Crisis Text Line: Text STEVE to 741741

Additional On-Campus Resources

Sewanee Police Department:

931.598.1111 (dispatcher) or 911 (emergency)

Chaplain's Office (confidential resource): 931.598.1274

Dean of Students Office (non-confidential resource):

931.598.1229



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