Procrastination

Procrastination is a trap that many college students fall into. Sometimes it is confused with laziness, but they are very different. Procrastination is an active process – you choose to do something else instead of the task that you know you should be doing.

Procrastination usually involves ignoring an unpleasant, but likely more important task, in favor of one that is more enjoyable or easier.

But giving in to this impulse can have serious consequences. Even minor episodes of procrastination can make us feel guilty or ashamed. It can lead to reduced productivity and cause us to miss out on achieving our goals. Procrastinating over a long period of time, we can become demotivated and disillusioned. It is important not let deadlines because that can end up putting you in a worse position than you would have been had you simply made time to complete the task.

How to Overcome Procrastination

• **Name the problem.** Procrastination is often a symptom of a problem rather than a problem itself. Get to the heart of the situation by asking yourself: Why am I procrastinating, what tasks am I procrastinating on, and what things am I using to procrastinate with? Figure out what is causing the procrastination and what you need to do to fix it.

• **Avoid unhelpful self-talk.** Repeating things like “I’m busy,” “I don’t have time,” and “I work better under pressure” are all ways that we talk ourselves into procrastinating. If you hear yourself saying these types of phrases, replace them with positive self-talk: “I can do this,” and “I can make time.” Then just do it!

• **Breakdown projects.** Sometimes, we procrastinate because we are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or anxious. Looking at an entire project can be daunting, and you can feel that you are long way away from finishing it. Instead of looking at the entire course or project, break the course or project into smaller actionable tasks and focus on immediate next steps. Once you complete a step, it is okay to give yourself a small break or reward before starting on the next one.

• **Minimize distractions.** It’s easy to get distracted when working on a tasking that we have little interest or motivation to complete. In these cases, we need to find ways to unplug from things that want to pull our attention away. If working on your computer, avoid websites that may be distracting. If your workspace is distracting, find a new place where you can work quietly and comfortably.

• **Have someone keep you company.** Studies show that we enjoy practically every activity more when we’re with other people. Join or start a study group and work on project with classmates.

• **Praise yourself when you’ve finished each step.** Studies show that hitting a goal releases chemicals in the brain that give you pleasure.