

## Wellness and Self-care

It is just as important to attend to your mental health as it is to your physical health. Below you will find some tips to achieving wellness. A good place to start is getting good sleep, exercising, and eating right. These activities are basic to both your physical and mental health. In addition to these three basic activities it is important to manage stress in a healthy way and to have positive social support. Don't try to make too many lifestyle changes at once. You will be more successful if you start out by making small changes and gradually adding more to your daily routine. If you find yourself regressing back to old habits, don't give up. Get back on track and move forward. Remember Rome was not built in a day!

In addition to the tips on staying healthy you will also find a link to anonymous screenings for depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions. If you are struggling with stress, anxiety, depression or any other issue do not hesitate to make an appointment with a counselor. Counseling is free and confidential to all students. An appointment can be made by calling 315 574-4034.



**Sleep** - Short changing your sleep can be catastrophic on learning. Research suggests that REM sleep (a stage of sleep) which generally occurs in the last two hours of a full night of sleep is critical for memory and learning (Bublitz, Soper, Brown, & Jenkins, 2002). If you are having difficulty getting good quality sleep (about 8 hours a night) check out these [suggestions](#).



**Exercise** – It is not secret that exercise is important for our physical health. A regular exercise routine not only reduces the risk for stroke, osteoporosis, certain cancers and diabetes but it can also decrease stress, reduce anger, anxiety and depression and provide a sense of greater well-being. Exercise does not require a lot of money. You can take advantage of the beautiful campus and nature trails and take a vigorous walk. When the weather is not nice you can walk inside taking advantage of the connecting buildings and the walking track inside the PE building. For additional benefits and tips check out the [Mental Health America](#) web site.



**Nutrition** - Your brain needs a healthy supply of nutrients to function properly. Making good food choices can directly impact how you feel and function. You can read more about managing a healthy diet of carbohydrates, fats and proteins on the [Mental Health America](#) web site.



**Healthy Coping** – Stress and anxiety is part of living. Anxiety can be motivating and help with productivity. Anxiety can push us to get to class on time, do self-care and accomplish our goals. Too much anxiety can be counterproductive, cause us to function poorly and in some cases actually paralyze us. We need to learn how to manage it. [Mental Health America](#) has some good advice.



**Social Connections** – We are inherently social creatures who thrive from being a member of a group. Making positive connections is critical to our mental health. Individuals who live in isolation report a decreased sense of wellbeing. In today’s world it is easy to get connected electronically. That can be a positive thing when the connection remains positive and helpful. So often digital connections turn into a negative where individuals, hiding behind a digital platform and possibly under a fake identity, feel brave enough to slander others. Digital connections are not all bad but even the most positive cannot replace the benefits of in-person social interaction. We should be trying to achieve a balance. There are a lot of opportunities on campus to get connected. Check out the many [clubs and organizations](#) at Herkimer College and look for one that interests you. Get to know other students in your classes. Find out what you have in common. Making connections is easier for some people and a challenge for some people. During the pandemic you will need to exercise proper precautions such as wearing a mask and social distancing. Many of the clubs and college activities continue to meet via Microsoft Teams and other virtual platforms.



**Take a screening** - These brief screenings are a way to determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a behavioral health professional. Think of these as a checkup from your neck up. This program is completely anonymous and confidential, and immediately following the brief questionnaire you will see your results, recommendations, and key resources. [Mental Health Screenings](#)



**Meet with a Counselor** – Counselors are available for all Herkimer College students and meeting with a counselor is free and confidential. It’s common for students to feel overwhelmed by challenges that can be helped with counseling. If we cannot help you, we will refer you to college offices, [community services](#), or [emergency services](#) that can. We can also point you in the direction of the right resources. You can make an appointment by calling 315 574-4034.

Students needing immediate assistance should call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: [1-800-273-TALK](tel:1-800-273-TALK) (8255)