

## Stress management is an intentional act

11.21.2024

Xiaolu Hsi, Ph.D., psychologist/clinical neuropsychology  
Student Mental Health and Counseling Service, MIT Health

### Stress for international students -

- Academic
- financial
- Interpersonal

- ∞ Is stress management just good time management and exercise?
- ∞ Eating right, exercise, spending time w/ people and sleep are important your mental well-being. Can you have them all?
- ∞ If you can “only three”, which three should you have?

### What is “stress”?

- “pressure” (压力)
- ” Burnout”
- “Always tired”
- “Lost motivation”
- Not interested in science any more;
- “can’t sleep” or “can’t sleep enough”
- “Stress eating”
- glittery, “can’t sit still”
- “Can’t focus”
- Irritable, “easily frustrated”
- “anti-social”: don’t feel like hanging out, or talking to others
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling anxious, panicky
- Your experience \_\_\_\_\_?

1. Evolution (of stress) – alert, alarm, activate; (pay attention to your “alarm bells”: sleep, eating, and cold/flu; “a stich in time”)
2. **Push** (disregard) the limit **vs.** **wrestle** w/ the limit (working with)
3. Can you “advance” the sleep you are going to get on Sat.?
4. **MIT**: “impostor phenomenon” (80% STEM; W > M; race; culture; NOT a medical condition)
  - “Get out of your head”: your emotions are not your enemy; your judgement against it.

- “reversed to-do list<sup>®</sup>” (cash in the desk drawer)
  - “Try failing and to survive it” / “the MIT Freshman moment<sup>®</sup>”
5. Know what you can and cannot control –
    - science
    - faculty
    - sleep-wake cycle
    - why you are here;
  6. Managing the environment and yourself:
    - driver or passenger? Be your own PM; progress report/GPS; the Email thread;
    - a to-do list is not time management
    - “Shopping list” and “hand-off list”
5. **SIPS<sup>®</sup>** - Let’s do stress management
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> S:** only eggs you know? all eggs in one buckets?
- 6. Manage your stress like it’s your job.**