



# "Potty Talk"

Brought to you by The Wellness Center  
Healthy and Happy Finals and Holidays!



## Managing Holiday Stress

For many of us, heading home for the holidays can be a stressful time.

Here are some coping strategies:

- **No expectations - no disappointment.** Having few or no expectations is the best preparation for being satisfied with whatever happens. The Taoist discipline of becoming like water and "going with the flow" can help us from get stuck, even when others are.

- Instead of thinking about what gifts you would like to receive, you might yourself the question: what three qualities or experiences do I want to have more of this holiday? Time to relax, good communication, intimate conversations, a chance to explore a hobby or creative project - answers may vary widely. The main point is to keep these three things in mind and actually put them into practice.

- It is okay to attend to your emotional needs, even if this means disappointing others. Unfortunately, taking of oneself is often as interpreted as selfishness by others. Only you can decide where the balance lies.

- It might help to have a heart-to-heart with your parent(s) about any of your concerns. There may be a need to revise old rules that no longer fit. A conflict of values and ideas is normal. If you can stay out of a blaming or victim mode, you will feel more in control and maintain a clearer perspective regarding your differences.

- Finally, a sense of humor can also be helpful. For instance, psychologist James Hillman remarks that extended family gatherings are the one place where we get to meet people with whom we have so little in common.

Adapted from Mark Evans, Ph.D., University of Oregon and the Counseling Center at the University of New Hampshire

"Potty Talk" is brought to you by the Wellness Center, which is located in Malley. To learn more about the topics discussed here, please contact:

Alison Bateman, Ph.D., Health Educator:  
ABateman@scu.edu: 408-554-4409  
Sarah Maciel, Assistant Health Educator:  
SMaciel@scu.edu: 408-554-4409

## STARING AT A COMPUTER SCREEN?

- Take eye breaks. Be sure to look away from your screen every 15 minutes — if not more. Look at something close up (check out your cuticles) and something far away, to help exercise your depth perception. It's especially smart to look out a window when searching to focus your eyes on something in the distance.
- Remember to blink! It lubricates the eyes. When staring at a computer screen we tend to blink about five times less than usual.
- Keep eye drops handy (artificial tears are best) -- especially in the winter when the heaters are going and eyes are prone to drying out.
- Adjust your workstation so the words you are reading are at eye level — you shouldn't have to look up or down to see your screen. Your back should lay flat against the back of your chair, which will help prevent neck strain.
- Sometimes it's nice to sit on a couch with your laptop, but don't do it for over an hour (it can cause neck strain). Make sure you're not working in the dark — a bright screen and dark ambiance strains the eyeballs!
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day, especially if you drink coffee in the morning. Caffeine dries out the eyeballs.

Adapted from

[http://www.brookingseyecare.com/NewsInfo\\_EyecareBlog\\_2448580.aspx](http://www.brookingseyecare.com/NewsInfo_EyecareBlog_2448580.aspx)

While the holidays are fun times for some, they can bring on feelings of sadness and loneliness for others.

A free and anonymous online depression screening, as well as a variety of other screenings, is available at the Wellness Center website: [www.scu.edu/wellness](http://www.scu.edu/wellness). Just click on the "Health & Wellness Screenings" link on the left.



## De-Stress with a Hand Massage!

1. Stroke the back of your hand, pushing firmly up toward the wrist and gliding back gently. Then squeeze your hand all over, pressing it between your palm and your fingers.
2. Squeeze each finger and make circular pressures over the joints with your thumb. Then hold the finger at its base and pull it gently to stretch it, sliding your grip up the finger and off the tip.
3. Stroke between the tendons on the back of the hand with your thumb. Stroke in the furrow to the wrists, doing four strokes in each furrow.
4. Turn your hand over and support the back with your fingers. Do firm circular and static pressures with your thumb, working all over the palm and around the wrist.
5. Finish the massage by stroking the palm of your hand from the fingers to the wrist. Push into it with the heel of your other hand, then glide gently back and repeat.

From [www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com). Please note this does not constitute medical advice.



Find us on Facebook and have Potty Talk and other wellness tips delivered straight to you!  
Search: SCU Wellness Center on Facebook  
Or visit us at [www.scu.edu/wellness](http://www.scu.edu/wellness)



## Tips for Staying Rested During Finals

- **Avoid Caffeine.** Relying on and consuming too much caffeine can leave you restless, anxious and sleepless.
- **Avoid Alcohol.** While alcohol causes drowsiness, it also contributes to insomnia. Alcohol disrupts normal sleep patterns, increasing fatigue the next day.
- **Use your bed for sleeping.** While bed may be a quiet place to study, you'll begin to associate bed with studying, which won't help you relax at night.
- **Take a nap.** Twenty-minute naps help to catch up on sleep, boost alertness and physical stamina.
- **Don't pull an all-nighter.** Studies show that students remember detailed course material better the next day if they get a good night's sleep rather than stay up all night trying to "cram" more information into their already bursting brains.
- **Exercise Regularly.** Try to exercise 20-to-30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep. For maximum benefit, exercise five-to-six hours before going to bed.
- **Don't Stress.** Prioritize and have realistic expectations. Anxiety leads to insomnia and students get the highest scores when they're not tired or hungry. Take care of your body, mind and spirit to be at your best.

Adapted from UC San Diego Wellness Center:  
<http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/general/12-08Sleep.asp>

## Test-Taking Tips

- **Budget your time.** Make sure you have sufficient time to study so that you are well-prepared for the test.
- **Go to review.** Pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test. Take careful notes and ask questions about items you don't understand.
- **Ask the instructor** to specify the areas that will be emphasized on the test.
- **Review** any material from practice tests, homework, sample problems, review material, the textbook, class notes...
- **Eat before a test.** Having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus, but avoid heavy foods, which can make you groggy.
- **Don't try to pull an all-nighter.** Get at least three hours of sleep before the test.
- **Put the main ideas/information/formulas onto a sheet** that can be quickly reviewed many times. This makes it easier to retain the key concepts that will be on the test.
- Try to **show up at least 5 minutes before** the test will start.
- Set your alarm and **have a backup alarm set as well.**
- **Go to the bathroom before** walking into the exam room. You don't want to waste time or be distracted during the test.

Adapted from: <http://www.testtakingtips.com/test/aenore.htm>