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COVID-19 Student Survival Advice

HOW TO MAKE IT THROUGH TRYING TIMES!

Report by: Dr. Christine Yalda, GVSU School of Criminal Justice

Reminders:

This slideshow reflects *student advice* about dealing with the COVID 19 crisis. In addition:

Remember that **we are all in this together**. See [GVSU Lakers Together](#) for up-to-date information about campus health and safety.

Make sure that you use necessary precautions

- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands
- Watch your (social) distance

If you are sick, take care of yourself and take care of others, by isolating if necessary.

The **GVSU Care Team** supports student concerns, including financial, basic needs, physical and mental health, campus climate concerns, off campus housing, concerns for well-being, and disturbing behavior. For help or more information, see the [CARE website](#).

The COVID-19 crisis and how students are surviving...in their own words:

In mid-March 2020, GVSU moved its face-to-face classes online, closed residential housing, and limited access to campus in response to the COVID-19 crisis. These necessary changes significantly disrupted students' everyday lives: an abrupt shift to virtual learning, revised schedules/assignments; employment changes (lost jobs, reduced hours, increased hours (essential workers), etc.); and housing changes (many moved in with friends or back home, where family responsibilities often became more critical). ***Yet, when asked, students shared remarkable insights and resilience in terms of how to survive these challenges.***

Here is their advice, in their own words...

Five Elements of Survival:

1. Do the Work
2. Ask for Help (*It's Okay!*)
3. Be Kind to Yourself and Others
4. Be Balanced
5. Be Adaptable



Do the Work:

Make and plan and stick to it – *Organization is key!*



- ☐ Use a planner or calendar
- ☐ Be proactive about due dates
- ☐ Never miss a deadline!

Do the Work:

Schedule and manage your time – *Stay focused, meet deadlines!*

- ❑ Create a routine with a weekly schedule
 - *Designate time for reading, discussion work, studying.*
- ❑ Write down **ALL** due dates as soon as you know them
 - *Cross them off as you finish them – One less thing to do!*
- ❑ Don't try to do everything in one day
 - *Pace yourself!*



Do the Work:

Keep up with the work – *Procrastination = Stress!*



**Check e-mail and
blackboard regularly**

*Don't miss course
changes/assignment reminders!*



Don't procrastinate

*Stay on top of your assignments –
they can build up quickly!*



**Read course materials –
Don't skim!**

*When you know the materials, it's
easier to participate!*

Do the Work:

Communication is key!



- ❑ Keep communication open with instructor
 - *Your situation may be different than others – Communicate that!*
- ❑ Talk to classmates
 - *Good communication is essential when working in groups!*

Do the Work:

Stay Focused and Persist!

- ❑ Focus and keep things in perspective
 - *Take it one day at a time!*
- ❑ Stay on track to achieve goals
 - *Work hard and keep going!*
- ❑ Don't. Quit.
 - *Persevere – You can do it!*



Ask for Help (It's Okay!):



- ❑ Talk with friends, classmates, faculty/staff
 - *During difficult times, many people experience similar feelings/fears – talk about it, you're not alone!*
- ❑ Utilize available resources
 - *Tutoring, counseling, advising, etc. – all FREE for GVSU students!*
- ❑ It's okay to seek help/support
 - *GVSU faculty/staff are here to assist you!*

Be Kind to Yourself and Others:

Be safe, make good choices.



Remember to BREATHE!

*Take your time, collect your thoughts,
stay safe.*



Think before you react – Don't panic!

*Keep a level head – choose rational over
irrational, use logic and reasoning.*

Be Kind to Yourself and Others:

Practice self-care – *Maintain physical, emotional, mental health!*

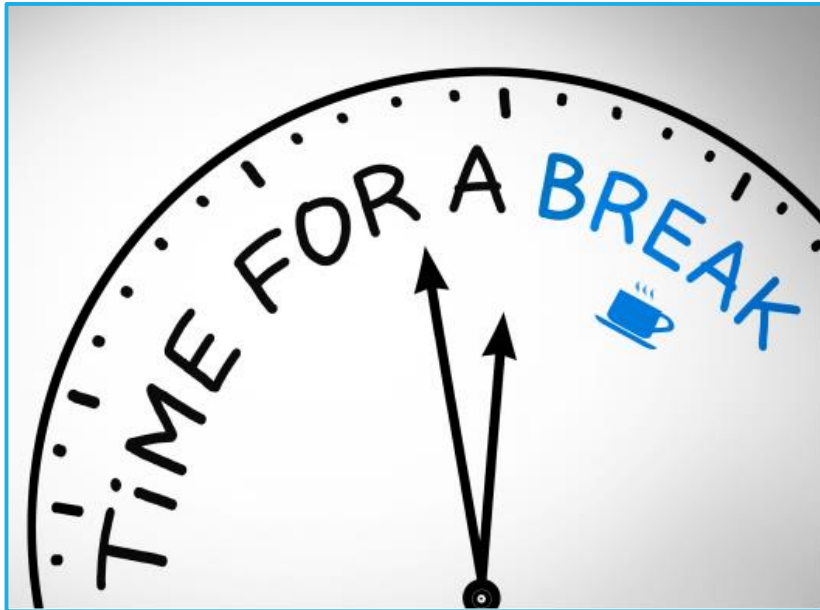
- ❑ Self-care, exercise, maintain relationships
 - *Take care of your body and mind, keep in touch with family/friends. Isolation isn't healthy.*

- ❑ Limit exposure to news and social media
 - *Constant negativity can be overwhelming and may worsen mental health.*



Be Kind to Yourself and Others:

Take a break from school if needed – *Reset and Recharge!*



- ☐ Don't overwork yourself – *Make time for you!*
 - *Schedule breaks into your daily agenda and TAKE THEM! Clear your mind before tackling the next item on your list.*
- ☐ It's okay to step away
 - *College is stressful! If you need a break from school, take it. Come back when you have a fresh mindset and are ready.*

Be Kind to Yourself and Others:

Give grace – Show compassion to yourself and others!

- ❑ Be gentle with yourself
 - *School is important, but not more important than your health and sanity.*
- ❑ Give yourself grace and understanding for your feelings and needs
 - *It's okay to do nothing or spend time with those you love, instead of being productive. The COVID-19 crisis is scary and unknown – if you need to take time away from school and work to care for yourself, DO IT!*
- ❑ Be kind and mindful
 - *Observe your surroundings, and don't be too hard on yourself. By keeping our wits about us, maintaining order, and exhibiting grace under pressure, we can persevere!*



Be Kind to Yourself and Others:

Do what you love!

- ❑ Invest your time wisely
 - *Do what you love, and don't take anything for granted.*
- ❑ Care for yourself and others
 - *Kindness and selflessness can go a long way in the world – don't lose sight of that, even when struggling yourself.*



Be Balanced:

School is not everything!



- ❑ Devote certain hours each day to online classes
 - *Designated hours for classwork will make it feel less like your entire day belongs to school.*
- ❑ Priorities may change, and that's okay
 - *Responsibilities may shift during a crisis. Family or work may become your primary focus for a while, but that doesn't make you any less of a student.*

Be Adaptable:

Keep Calm and Carry On!



- ☐ Be flexible – This is new for everyone!
 - *You may have to adopt a new routine or learning style as circumstances change.*

- ☐ Prepare for multiple scenarios
 - *Have a plan for different situations – hope for the best, but plan for the worst.*

Be Adaptable:

Figure out the “new normal” together!

- ❑ Be supportive
 - *Everyone is in a similar situation, don't face the struggle alone.*
 - *Faculty, staff, and students are in this together – communicate, listen, and take it one step at a time.*



Be Adaptable:

Take time to grow.



☐ Have patience

- *There's an adjustment period after sudden change, don't rush it.*
- *Know that things will get better – they may not go back to the way they originally were, but you will have grown and learned through this experience, and you'll be stronger for it.*

About This Presentation:

This presentation summarizes student survival advice collected in two General Education courses at the end of **Winter 2020 semester**. Students were asked:

You are completing this semester at a unique time in history. If you could offer some “survival advice” to future students, what would you want them to know?

Combined, these classes included students from 25 different majors. Eighty-percent (80%) of the students (n=56) answered the question.

For more information about this project, please contact **Dr. Christine Yalda**, Grand Valley State University, 616-331-7135, yaldac@gvsu.edu.

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