

Procrastination

What is procrastination?

Procrastination is the avoidance or delaying of a task which you need to do. It can lead to serious consequences for a student especially when his/her academic performance is potentially affected. Procrastination involves intentional decision to put off a task for no valid reason, and instead, doing something else of lesser importance despite there being negative consequences.

Why do we procrastinate?

Faulty thinking: Thinking that tomorrow will take care of itself and so delay is okay, minimizing the consequences of delay, or not able to estimate accurately how much time the tasks will take.

Pleasure seeking: Only engaging in activities that are pleasurable and fun should always come first.

Fear and anxiety: Doubting one's own ability to tackle tasks and goals and feeling overwhelmed with the task and ends up spending a lot of time worrying instead of completing tasks.

Perfectionism: Unrealistic expectations of self and overly high standards of self to perform in the task, thinking that unless it is perfect, it is not worth doing.

Fear of failure/disapproval: Concern of being judged negatively by others based on task performance, therefore procrastination is a way to avoid this risk.

Attention problems: Difficulty concentrating especially for tasks which requires prolong focus.

Lack of knowledge and skills: Uncertain of how to go about a task and accomplishing it.

Time: Poor time management and inadequate prioritizing of tasks or simply too much to do with so little time.



How to know if you are procrastinating?

If you have some of these signs, then you may be procrastinating:

- 1) You have responsibilities that you are not doing.
- 2) You start things that you do not finish.
- 3) When you are not sure, you put off making decisions.
- 4) You are constantly finding ways to extend deadlines.
- 5) You have doubts and fears which inhibit you from taking action.

Scan Me



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Beat procrastination

Notice when you are procrastinating



Know what do you procrastinate about. Be aware of your procrastination activities, things that you tell yourself and emotions that keep your procrastination. Ask yourself: "What is my goal that I want to achieve?" and get yourself back on track.

Dismiss procrastination excuses

Deal with excuses that you give when you procrastinate so that you NO longer feel OK to procrastinate. Ask yourself: "If I do/don't make some start to the task right now, what might happen?"



Changing unhelpful self-talks

You may tell yourself unkind things that may keep you procrastinating. Come up with a more helpful alternative thought.

Reward yourself

Reward yourself after getting a job done. When you reward yourself for your achievements, the less likely you feel like you are missing out when doing a task.



To-Do list

Create that initial momentum by making a to-do list based on your priorities and order them in accordance to importance.

Break down tasks

Include smaller and simpler tasks in the to-do list as smaller tasks are more readily achievable and may motivate you to complete the remaining items.

How to help a friend who is procrastinating?



Sharing is caring

If your friend approaches you on how to complete a certain task, you may want to guide them on how to do it.

Focus on consequences

Help your friend to identify the consequences of not completing a task which he/she is putting off. In addition, help your friend to identify the benefits of completing it.

Role-modelling

Your friend may benefit if you share how you approached and solved a similar problem in the past.

Be kind, encouraging, and supportive

Listen openly to your friend's problems. Offer suggestions and ideas, but without forcing them to adhere to it.

Promote growth mindset

Ask your friend how he/she can do better when things don't go well, how much he/she has learned and what aspects of the task which are interesting.

References:
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24/7 Mental Health Crisis Hotline
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