

# FEELING OVERWHELMED? IT'S TIME TO.....



## NOURISH

- Stop and have a cup of tea (non-caffeinated)
- Eat a proper meal (not toast!)
- Eat iron and protein-rich foods – e.g. nuts, broccoli, quinoa
- Cook dinner for/with friends
- Do some gardening – water a pot plant, or RMIT's edible garden in the old goal courtyard
- Go into nature – walk to Carlton Gardens, the Botanical Gardens, take the tram to Port Melbourne Beach, or train out of the city
- Spend time with animals – hug your/a cat or dog, go to the dog park, visit a pet shop, shelter, or the Collingwood children's farm
- Look at pictures of kittens/puppies/small cute animals
- Bake yourself something delicious
- Eat chocolate (then share with your cohort to feel good about bringing joy to others)
- Wrap yourself in a weighted blanket
- Watch a kids movie
- Watch a wholesome Kdrama (Korean Dramas)



## MOVE

- Go for a walk, run or swim
- Take five minutes to stretch and move your body
- Go to yoga class or a group fitness class (RMIT offers free classes)
- Go to the gym and do weight lifting
- Try combat training (e.g. jiu jitsu)
- Walk your/a dog and/or ride your/a bike
- Have a swim and spa across the road at the City Baths
- Jump ten times on the spot
- Go out dancing or put some music on in your bedroom and dance around as if you are Beyoncé or Bob Marley



## REFLECT

- Ask yourself, and answer honestly, where can I cut back?
- Ask yourself what advice you would give to a friend in this situation. Take that advice.
- Remember how far you have come
- Do some reflective writing – e.g. keep a journal
- Try automatic writing – e.g. the 'morning pages' technique
- Consider this: time is non-linear and there already exists a point in the future when what's stressing you is over – all you have to do is hang in there and get to that point, because it already exists. Phew!
- List five things you are grateful for – research shows gratitude can rewire the brain and improve mental health
- Seek motivation – read or watch an inspiring success story, think of someone who inspires you
- Try to notice your early signs of stress, so you can identify and tend to stressful situations in advance (rather than at crisis point)



## CONNECT

- Call home or call a friend
- Visit family
- Speak to a counsellor or psychologist – RMIT offers a free counselling service
- Write a letter
- Speak to your supervisor or the HDR coordinator
- Ask someone for a hug
- Tell a mate how you feel, ask them to go for a coffee and a walk with you
- Reach out to an old friend
- Debrief with someone sympathetic who 'gets it' (hint – your fellow HDR candidates do!)



## REST

- Step away from the screen
- Leave the thing that is making you stressed for now. Come back to it later. It will wait.
- Lie on the floor and count 20 deep breaths
- Take a nap – research shows this is an effective creative method
- Do some gentle breathing exercises (mostly slowing down the exhale)
- Take a day off. Yes, you can!
- Get off social media (or, at least, filter your social media to be non-anxiety inducing)
- Soak in a bath (optionally ingesting wine and/or something else in the bath)
- Meditate (you can start with an app like Smiling Mind, Calm or Headspace)
- Get a massage – cheap massages are available to students at the RMIT Myotherapy Clinic (rmitmyo@rmit.edu.au)
- Relax in the HDR breakout space, or the break room in Building 10
- Get your hair washed
- Go to bed early and prioritise your sleep.
- Can't sleep? Try yoga nidra sleep meditation, a sleep 'hygiene' routine, and turn off your phone.



## LAUGH

- Send a friend a funny meme
- Try laughter yoga
- Start a silly dance party (maybe just with yourself)
- Watch funny youtube videos, a short episode of a webseries or a comedy – something to make you laugh!
- Do a physical activity just for fun (not perfection!) – e.g. contemporary dance classes, instructed dance videos online
- Go to a comedy show
- Try the 'pitching technique' – change the pitch of your anxious internal dialogue to high or low (this way it is no longer your voice, just a silly-sounding cartoon voice you can laugh at)



## SENSE

- Use your voice – e.g. join a choir, go chanting, yell loudly (outside the office)
- Drink something really cold
- Close your eyes for five minutes and focus on breathing
- Alter your work environment for a couple of hours/days – maybe work from home, a library, a friend's house, a café
- Do something tactile – e.g. fixing your bike, pottery, knitting
- Learn/play an instrument
- Go somewhere new or take a new route home
- Notice and count all the sounds you can hear
- Touch a mix of fabrics
- Walk without headphones so you can hear the world
- Immerse yourself in water – e.g. there is an onsen in the city
- Make a playlist of music to switch over to when you need to de-stress (add some music that makes you feel amazing/happy/like a boss)



## ORGANISE

- Revisit your work plan and ask yourself, is this realistic? (Surprise – it's probably not realistic)
- Make a (new) plan
- Make a To Do list – write 'make list' as the first point, followed by three tasks you've already completed ('get out of bed', 'turn on computer' etc)
- Tidy your immediate space – making the bed or cleaning up your desk space can provide some mental clarity
- Pre-prepare some meals for the week ahead
- Do admin tasks like referencing that don't require a huge amount of brainpower but still provide a sense of productivity
- Take a photo of this poster to refer to when needed
- Schedule some non-negotiable exercise – a routine can help avoid the stress of decision-making in the moment