

Chill & Chat for Classified Professionals - Fall 2021 Flex Day

Thank you for attending the Chill & Chat for Classified Professionals during the Fall 2021 Flex Day! We appreciate your attendance, and we hope that this has been a safe space in which you were able to support each other and share your concerns about working on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please contact Robin Roy (rroy@laspositascollege.edu) or Sheena Turner-August (sturneraugust@laspositascollege.edu) with any questions about the information below.

Following are some suggestions for managing the stress of working on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Research in psychology shows that one way of managing stress is to both **seek social support** from others, and **give social support** to others. Connecting with and checking in with supportive co-workers might help to alleviate some of the stress you may be experiencing.
- Another finding from psychological research shows that **increasing your sense of control** over a situation can help decrease some of the stress you may be experiencing. Of course, there are many things about the COVID-19 pandemic that are out of our control, and there are many things about working on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic that we can't control. The idea here is to think of things that we can control about our situation, such as:
 - Creating a regular daily routine
 - When possible, taking breaks from work to stretch and/or check in with a supportive co-worker
 - Spending time outdoors during breaks (research shows that spending time outside can reduce stress levels, and might even lower our heart rate and blood pressure)
 - Keeping an organized work environment (research shows that clutter might increase our stress levels)
 - Deciding to wear a mask to protect ourselves even if the county decides not to mandate mask wearing
- Related to the idea of increasing your sense of control is using **problem-focused coping** when dealing with stress. Problem-focused coping involves doing your best to confront a stressful situation directly by engaging in problem solving related to the situation. For example, if you have concerns about COVID-19 safety in the workplace, you might bring these concerns to your supervisor or to members of the classified senate.
- In some cases, you might try to engage in problem-focused coping, but due to factors that are outside of your control, the situation may not be able to be resolved. This is where **emotion-focused coping** comes in. This form of coping with stress involves attempting to change your

emotional reaction to the stressful situation, for example, working on calming yourself down in a frustrating situation.

- Using **visualization** is another thing that might be helpful in alleviating stress. There are different ways to use visualization, but one way is to imagine various scenarios that you might encounter at work, and then spend time thinking through how you might cope with each scenario.
- Lack of **sleep** can contribute to stress, so it's important to do your best to make sure that you're getting enough sleep. Stress can contribute to difficulty sleeping, but please see these links for some tips on getting better sleep: [Good Sleep in Times of Stress](#) and [What Is Sleep Hygiene?](#)
- Using **deep breathing techniques** and **grounding techniques** can be helpful in calming yourself down in the moment, especially if you're feeling some of the physical effects of stress such as increased heart rate and rapid breathing. Visit these links to learn more about [diaphragmatic breathing](#), [box breathing](#), and [mindful breathing](#).
- Practice **self-compassion**. Self-compassion involves showing kindness and understanding toward yourself, just as you would show to a friend. It involves trying to get away from criticizing and judging yourself. For example, you shouldn't judge or criticize yourself for experiencing stress or having concerns related to working on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Self-compassion would be recognizing that it's perfectly acceptable to have these feelings, and that you shouldn't feel badly about having them. Learn more about self-compassion here: [What Self-Compassion Is](#) and [What Self-Compassion Is Not](#).
- See the following article for tips on returning to work in person: [Dread going back to the office? Therapists share tips on how to readjust](#).
- If you feel that you would like to speak with a mental health professional, you can access counseling services through our **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. [Log in here](#), and use CHABOT LAS POSITAS for the company code. For immediate support, you can call 1-800-344-4222.