Coping Skills for You and Your Mentees

While college life can be a lot of fun, it is also accompanied by stress such as mid-terms, picking out courses for the next semester, thinking about changing majors, etc. As a mentor, you have the opportunity to ease some of the anxiety your mentees are feeling. Your mentor role enables you to address some of these stress-related issues before they get out of hand.

Signs that there may be a problem:
♦ Unusual changes in behavior
♦ Increasing irritability
♦ Reports of sleeping more or less than usual

What can you do to help?
♦ Be involved
♦ Show sensitivity
♦ Be accessible
♦ Ask open-ended questions to start a dialogue
♦ Offer suggestions for preventative coping skills, such as proper diet, exercise, sleeping, developing friend networks

Examples of negative coping mechanisms:
♦ Alcohol abuse
♦ Drug abuse
♦ Eating disorders

Recognize the times to refer:
♦ Threats of harming themselves (this is a permanent solution to temporary problems)
♦ Major changes in behavior (appearance, attitudes)
♦ Refer to: Student Counseling Services
http://www.public.iastate.edu/~stdtcouns/

Key Points
♦ Remember that you are not responsible for another person’s behavior
♦ Showing compassion for another person has long-lasting effects

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