Procrastination

Have you left your assignment to the last minute, are you putting off making a specific decision, or finding that you tend to delay tasks despite knowing they are important and/or need to be done……?

Procrastination is normal and expected to some degree, **BUT** when the consequences are negative and you start to feel guilty, or notice that everything is piling up, your procrastination is becoming problematic.

WHY do I procrastinate even though I know I should be actioning the task or making the decision?

- Procrastination is often a means of avoiding the discomfort we experience or anticipate when performing a specific task or make an important decision
- This discomfort can arise from many different thoughts and assumptions we hold about ourselves, with some including:
    - Resenting having to do things that we may not want to wanting to be in control
    - A fear of failure or the negative perception of others
    - Perfectionism and needing everything to be done perfectly
    - Uncertainty regarding the impact of the decision
    - Low confidence in your ability to make the correct decision or perform the task well
    - Limited energy or motivation

By creating excuses to avoid or delay the discomfort we expect to feel, we do not get the opportunity to either confirm or disconfirm our expectation, nor do we develop the ability to tolerate discomfort…

This vicious cycle maintains our tendency to procrastinate – INSTEAD, we should adjust our unhelpful thinking, tolerate discomfort, eliminate excuses and apply more practical solutions

PRATICAL STRATEGIES include:

1. Identify what needs to be done, prioritise, and break each task into smaller, less intimidating steps;
2. Attempt the worst or least desirable task first;
3. OR, start with a task that you will enjoy, which will enhance motivation and energy, and then alternate to a less desirable task that you have been putting off;
4. Set time limits for tasks and schedule them into the time of day where you are most productive;
5. Establish a distraction fee environment and use reminders (alarms, diaries etc.) to prompt you;
6. Reward yourself for completing those challenging tasks

An action plan can assist you to manage your time more effectively and accessing support from Student Services or the Learning Centre is also encouraged.

For further information about procrastination and practical strategies to **dismiss excuses** and **INCREASE ACTION** please refer to: http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=50.

Free, confidential counselling available for currently enrolled students at
USQ Student Services
Toowoomba Campus, G Block Ph: (07) 4631 2372
Springfield Campus Level 3 Main Building Ph: (07) 3470 4400
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