



AANA STUDENT WELLNESS

6 TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR PROGRAM & STAYING CONNECTED TO THE ONES YOU LOVE

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By Patrick K. Faircloth, PhD, LPC (MI), NCC

<p>Why will you complete this program?</p>	<p>With the help of your friend or partner discuss and agree why you will complete this program. Print it out on a paper and post it in a place that you will both see it every day. Carry a second copy with you everywhere. In tough times read this and it will matter.</p>
<p>Keep talking:</p>	<p>No matter what happens, no matter how hard it might be . . . keep talking. When we do not communicate with our significant others about our daily experiences they can feel we are slowly closing them out and they are losing us to school or work. It is very important to share concerns and successes and hear the concerns and successes of the family. We stay connected through communication.</p>
<p>Have at least one Mini-Hobby:</p>	<p>Find at least one thing that you like to do, something small that does not take 10 hours a week. What I call a mini-hobby, like bar-b-que once a week or every two weeks.</p>
<p>The month in review:</p>	<p>If you have friends and extended family they will wonder and worry about you, you need them as part of your support system. I suggest scheduling a large gathering every few months or on holidays where your role is to reconnect with everyone. You can email/snail mail all the important people in your life a monthly update about what is happening in your life and how your studies are going. This will keep them connected to you. I would also share this with my significant other and mention him or her in it.</p>
<p>Diet, Exercise, Self-care:</p>	<p>Be alert for any changes in your health. Plan a physical de-stressor. I schedule in one or two therapeutic deep tissue massages a month and I workout 45 minutes three times a week.</p>

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Establish a schedule:

Make a print out your schedule so that everyone important to you knows where you are and what you are doing. This is another way they will feel connected to you and your activities:

- Time in school or training – this time is not negotiable, it is what it is, be it 12 or 15 hour days.
- Study time – some people may need 1 hour each day and others might need more or less. The point is, set the same time for studying each day.
- Personal/alone time – you may not have enough hours in the day to take an hour or more for yourself but you can take ten minutes each day just for you. Perhaps it is a cup of herbal tea every evening with no distractions as you clear your mind and relax. Perhaps it is something else, but take a minimum of 10 minutes every day at the same time every day, just for you.
- Family time – for my family this was Friday evening movie time. We would all go to the tape store and select a movie together through negotiation and sometimes take turns on the selection. Then we would have dinner together and watch a movie. Afterward, we'd share thoughts about the movie and enjoy either other. Then I would go to my room and study.
- Significant other time – my partner and I schedule dates/intimate times. There are dates and there are intimate times and they are not always the same. Relationships need more than just intimate moments in the bedroom. They need dates that can be as simple as a half hour walk in the park 3x a week or an hour and a half on a beach 1x/week. The intimate times need to be scheduled into every day or with a frequency that is agreeable to both parties.
- Division of labor – you may want to continue to do some household chores but during this period your workload should be reduced or in a perfect world perhaps eliminated except where it may be therapeutic. If you have the financial means consider paying someone to cover your chores until your program is complete.

Remember you are a completer!

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