

## The Breaking Point

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We have arrived at “that time in the semester” – that time when it feels like you cannot study anymore or do anymore work on projects and papers and Thanksgiving break seems like it will never get here. Maybe you have also been putting off talking to your roommate about that thing he or she does that really annoys you, and you are finally reaching your breaking point. Maybe you are actually dreading going home for Thanksgiving because you do not want to spend much time with your family members, who seem to get into arguments during the holidays. The stress just keeps increasing, and it is coming from multiple places, and you find yourself asking, “When will the stress end?” and “When will I reach my breaking point?”

Although a certain level of stress can help you get things accomplished, too much stress or mishandled stress can really take a toll mentally, physically, and emotionally. Mentally, you might be forgetful, bored, and/or confused, and you might find yourself spacing out in your classes. Physically, you might notice changes in your appetite and quality of your sleep, and you might feel tense and have muscle aches and headaches. Emotionally, you might feel anxious, depressed, frustrated, and irritable, and you might cry more frequently and isolate yourself from family and friends.

As you can see, too much stress affects us in multiple ways, and yet we accept it as an inevitable part of life and that there really is not much that can be done to alleviate it. It is important for people to take their stress level seriously and to find ways to manage it

so that it does not become overwhelming. Some people relieve their stress by getting an adequate amount of sleep, by exercising, by eating balanced meals, and by meditating. Other people find it helpful to vent their frustrations to their supportive friends and family.

For others, relieving their stress is not an easy task. I am sure that you have seen or read suggestions on how to manage your stress. Let me guess, you still feel stressed. Why is this? Has your stress level become so overwhelming that you have no idea what to do about it? Sometimes students feel very desperate at this time of the semester because there are so many demands being placed on them by their professors, family, and friends. These students do not know where to start, let alone how to manage their stress. In other words, they have reached their breaking point. Sometimes it can be helpful for these students to talk to a counselor, a professor, or a close friend or family member in order to help them figure out what steps to take so that they no longer feel so desperate. It is important to remember that you are not alone in this – other people feel as desperate and stressed as you do and there are people who can help you through this time.