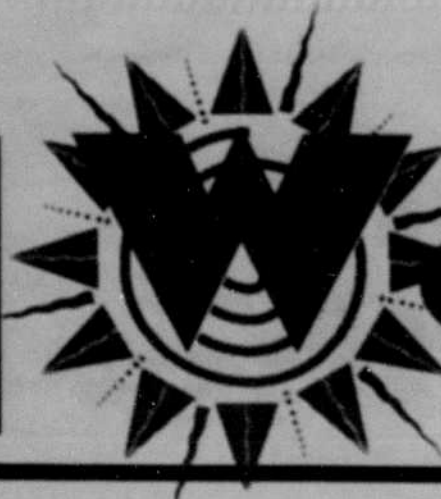


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# Well Now

Your Student Health Center Newsletter

## Surviving as a non-traditional student

By Anita D. Glantz

I experienced my first-ever, full-fledged panic attack during my first week back at college after a five-year hiatus. Not only was I starting over after a prolonged absence, I was taking graduate-level courses for the first time, I was older and proportionately less energetic, and I was single-parenting a two-year-old who was transitioning into daycare. Stress was my middle name, and it showed.

### Coping with excessive stress

Not all students at the U of O are 18-22, single, and free from extracurricular responsibility. In fact, 5200 of us, a full 32%, are 25 years or older, and many of us are married, have children, have part- or full-time jobs, are international students coping with language and cultural challenges, and/or have other additional responsibilities. Add to the list classes, exams, papers, and deadlines sandwiched into hurried-and-harried ten-week terms and you have the perfect recipe for Overwhelming Stress. Often, sleep is sacrificed, tempers are short, and family life, scholastic performance, and health all suffer. Coupled with feelings of isolation and a lack of community support, we may not make it.

### Resources are available

Thankfully, there is no need to struggle through it alone. There are places, right here on campus, where you can turn for guidance and support. The **Returning Students Association**, located in the lower level of the EMU near the computer lab, provides networking and information services by and for non-traditional students. During their posted office hours, usually starting at 8 a.m., students can drop-in for coffee, conversation with other students who have similar issues, and access to a wide range of referrals. "If you have a need," says coordinator Larry Haftl, "I could probably find someone who could satisfy it."

The **Women's Center** is a similarly open and friendly place, abounding in resources, information, and helpful staff. Located on the lower level of the EMU, next to the ASUO office, the Women's Center offers workshops, groups, and events which may be relevant to your needs. For example, I attended a meeting of the "NETworking Women in Transition" group, a helpful source of career and academic planning information and support in an informal setting. The Women in Transition program—designed specifically for older and returning students, single parents, and others dealing with life transitions—also pro-

vides a non-traditional student peer adviser.

The **Counseling Center** is another invaluable campus resource. Located upstairs in the Student Health Center (enter on the west side of the building), the Counseling Center provides counseling services free of charge to current students. Individuals and couples counseling, crisis services, and support groups are all available—including groups specifically for graduate students, international students, and women (subject to sufficient enrollment). The first step is an intake interview, which is done on a drop-in basis: Mondays 9-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m.; Tuesdays 10-12 and 1-4; Wednesdays and Thursdays 11-12 and 1-4; Fridays 11-12 and 1-3.

For students who need academic support, **Academic Learning Services**, located in room 68 of Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, offers tutoring, classes, test preparation, and free, drop-in writing and math labs to help you succeed. They also sponsor the Educational Opportunities Program for students who qualify, including low-income students, students with disabilities, and students whose parents did not graduate from a four-year college.

For student parents seeking support and information, heading off-campus is often the best bet, and very worthwhile. **Birth to Three**, located two miles south of campus at Parker Elementary School, is an excellent resource organization for people with young children. They offer parenting classes and groups, and a free drop-in resource room on Wednesdays from 11:30-3:30, with a safe and cheerful play space, helpful staff, and a lending library. The Birth to Three "warmline" offers phone support, referrals, and assistance with parenting issues. For two dollars, Birth to Three can provide a copy of the Parenting Resource Directory, which includes a wealth of information on local resources for families with children, from child care to health care to recreation.

When the going gets tough, reaching out for information, networking, resources, and support can make your load feel tremendously lighter. Whatever you need, the groups listed above can either help directly, or they can connect you with someone else who can. In addition to community resources, don't overlook the potential supportiveness of family, neighbors, and friends. That's what they're there for!

### Self-help Strategies

Effective self-help strategies, including stress management, time management, nutrition, rest, and exer-



Anita Glantz takes a break from studying to enjoy a snack with her son Benjamin.

cise, are essential to keep you healthy, calm, energized, and ready to tackle that early morning exam. If you're wanting to make some changes but don't know where to start, the **Health Education Program** on the main floor of the Student Health Center is a great place to begin. The Health Education Program offers a lending library on topics from stress to nutrition, and is staffed by Peer Health Educators who can provide information and assistance. One-on-one health counseling is also available by appointment, and various health-related workshops are offered free-of-charge during each term, including smoking cessation and weight management.

Most of us spend each day endlessly sitting—in class, in the library, and at our computers—minds spinning at top speed and bodies sedentary. Just 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week can keep both your body and your mind in top form all week long. Try biking to class three days a week, or

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## Seasonal Affective Disorder: Beating the Winter Blues



By Kristina Artist

Let's face it. Surviving winter term at the U of O can be a challenge. From mid-October and even into spring, the abundance of rain and gloomy skies that surround Eugene can be depressing

and frustrating. Many students start to feel lethargic, irritated and depressed. But students are not alone. In fact, a great majority of the population experience some seasonal changes in feelings of well-being and in behavior. For example, energy level, sleep, and eating are all behaviors that can be affected by seasonal changes. These winter months are also when Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

makes an appearance in six percent of the U.S. Population.

SAD is different from feeling that you have the "winter blues." With SAD, an ongoing depression occurs that the individual is unable to shake. The person suffering from SAD feels consistently bad throughout the winter and experiences such depression for several years. In addition to depression, symptoms include loss of appetite, low energy, sleep disturbance, and an increased rate in carbohydrate consumption. This increase probably occurs because research shows that people with SAD experience more energy when eating carbohydrates than people who do not suffer from SAD (Rosenthal, 1993).

SAD can affect anyone, but seems to occur more in women and in people aged twenty to forty. In addition, factors such as genetics, environment, and stress can play a role in the development of SAD. College freshman can be a population at risk especially if the move to college involves a change to a higher latitude and to fewer daylight hours as a result. College freshman are also at a greater risk of developing SAD if they were awakened by parents in the morning and exposed to natural early morning light. Without parents to make sure that they get to class, students may miss early morning sun exposure and lie for hours in a dark room without sunlight. Also, the demands of college tend to pose a

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