

Setting up for Success

ANDREA JIMENEZ: Welcome everyone. My name is Andrea Jimenez. I'm the Program Coordinator for Global Connections. Presenting for us tonight, we have from Cougar Health Services, Andy Song who's going to talk to us about setting up for success for your fall semester as a global student. Thank you all so much for joining us. Please do stick around too. As a reminder, we have our secret code word of the day coming up pretty soon. Without further ado, Andy, can you take it away?

ANDY SONG: Thank you. That was great introduction. It's very rare when I get introduced. That makes me feel very special. Yes. Like she said, I am Andy. Actually we're not part of Cougar Health Services anymore, we switched over to the Office of the Dean of Students. But I am from health promotion I am the mental health promotion and suicide prevention coordinator over there. This is setting up for success. We made this because yes, for over a year we've been working from home. I've got to learn how to adjust quickly from being in-person to being trapped in a tiny room, and working productively. Today's training, we're going to identify four steps to setting up your workstation and describe multiple time management strategies. Working/school from home.

What are some anticipated challenges to studying or working from home feel? You can go ahead, shout out your answers, type in chat. Just what are you anticipating is going to be difficult?

FEMALE 1: Providing comfort for just really [inaudible 00:02:00] work.

ANDY SONG: Yeah. I see someone saying a cat stepping on the keyboard. Technology, yeah. Oh my goodness. I can speak two hours or a whole day about all the technical difficulties we had. Sharing space with families, staying motivated, definitely something I've been through also.

We're going to dive in a little bit about setting up a home office. We're going to break this into choosing your space, gathering what materials you're going to need, setup for your own comfort and make it your own. [NOISE] Choose your space, make sure it's private. You don't want other people listening in or just peeking over your shoulder while you're working. [NOISE] Make sure the noise levels are not distracting or sometimes being too quite is distracting. Some ambient noise might help you focus and be productive, or if it's too noisy, you're distracted and you're unable to work. Definitely be mindful of the noise levels. [NOISE] Then make sure you have Internet. I mean, in these days without Internet, people can't really do anything, especially schooling online. [NOISE] Then temperature control. If I'm too cold or too hot, I'm not working. It's very uncomfortable. My hands are freezing if I'm typing, or I'm sweating, and I'm just not comfortable when it's really hot and it's really hard to focus. Instead, I'm focused on the temperature of the room. Then the windows and lighting.

People might not know this, but windows are pretty important, well, for me at least. Being able to see into the outside world instead of four white walls can make a difference. Then make sure your lighting is all right. Make sure it's bright lighting, not too bright or too dim where your computer or what you're reading is too bright for you or you can't read it. Then what else are some things that we could take into consideration about choosing your space?

FEMALE 1: Letting people know that you're working?

ANDY SONG: Yeah. You can verbally let them know or you put a sign up on the door saying, "Hey, I'm working right now, please don't bother me." Anything else?

FEMALE 1: You can make a schedule of when you want to study, then have like that for the week. Hold a sign at the door, make it more formal.

ANDY SONG: Yeah. Put your schedule out, let people know your schedule. You can have a physical piece of paper or share your calendar with somebody else. Perfect. Calendar schedule available next to you. Not all of us will have the perfect space, an extra office or even a desk to use. How can we be creative in making sure that regardless of the space, we're able to have the privacy or noise control we need?

FEMALE 1: Earbuds? I don't know.

ANDY SONG: Earbuds.

FEMALE 1: Soft music?

ANDY SONG: Soft music. Okay. Coffee shop studying.

Again, somebody said you can let people know that you're studying. [NOISE] Now here are some creative ways to use your existing space. Even if the space isn't perfect, there are some ways to make it comfortable. If it's not private, you can hang a curtain slightly closed when you are working or and when it's open, it lets people know, "Hey, I'm free. You can come in and talk to me".

Then having a Wi-Fi outlet. I know this isn't a Wi-Fi outlet but also having just general outlets too. We don't want our computers dying. Especially if we're right in the middle of writing an essay or an important assignment that you haven't saved yet, and your computer just runs out of juice and it's not saved and you have to start it all again. Make sure you have that proper Wi-Fi, you have those cords, and you're always ready to go.

[NOISE] Then noise level. You could have noise canceling headphones, have white noise machines, or even a fan to help drawn out nearby noises. You can play some music or you can just let people know around you, hey, I'm working. I don't want to really be distracted by noise

if you can keep it down just for an hour or so while I get this done. Temperature control. Too hot, use a fan, AC if you have it. Too cold, dress comfy.

Working from home brings an advantage of you can dress as comfortable as you want. You can layer up, you can have your blankets on you. Anything you can do to warm up from getting cold. [NOISE] Now gathering your materials. What do you need? We see laptops, computers, notebooks, pens, pencils, calculators, your writing surface. What are some storage options, or any other things that you feel like you would need? I see coffee, desk drawers.

FEMALE 1: Water.

ANDY SONG: Water. Having snacks nearby, so you're not going in and out of the room. I see some very, guess positive reactions to that. Cube organizers. Again, all of these can be to your aesthetic too. Make it your own. Gather all that you need by your desk. This can help minimize distractions from getting up to grab things throughout your study time.

Then I see plants. I don't understand plants as much. But I hear a lot of my co-workers love having plants, they says it makes their room vibrant. I want to test it out, I have a fake plant. We're still trying to test that out. Setup for comfort. Why is comfort important?

To be right in the head space for learning.

FEMALE 1: Your back can easily get uncomfortable and you're going to want to stop before you're done.

ANDY SONG: Yeah, so ergonomics. Right? We're actually going to get into ergonomics. Hold onto your ergonomic thoughts. Yeah, it helps you stay focused, especially for long periods of study time or paper writing sessions. Yeah, it boosts your focus or productivity. It also helps your wellbeing. It can boost your wellbeing while being comfortable in working or studying. Then it also has injury prevention techniques.

Ergonomics comes into play. Think ergonomics. [NOISE] Now home ergonomics. [NOISE] Ergonomics; the science and practice of designing tasks, equipment, and workplaces considering human capabilities and limitations, or simply stated, fitting the task to the person. The benefits of it is prevention of injuries, reduced fatigue and discomfort, increased productivity, increased work quality. We actually have some links here that I'm going to pull up. [NOISE] I will copy and paste these [NOISE] into the chat. Oh, something happened. Sorry, technical difficulties. The first link here is just office ergonomics; adjusting your environment. It'll tell you a little bit about how to adjust your chair, your keyboard and mouse, your monitor, adjusting the lighting, office equipment, and then even your work practices and how to get assistance on it. This other link, let me copy and paste this. This goes into more detail about it. It just has that definition of what ergonomics is. That have different links of how to make your office ergonomic towards you. [NOISE] At home ergonomics. Be creative.

People have started getting into the standing desks. Say you don't have a standing desk, what can we do? [NOISE] The cardboard on the table. If you're done sitting, your legs are getting a little numb, raise up your keyboard or your computer mouse. You can even use a piece of the cardboard or a cardboard box to help you stand and be comfortable. You can raise your monitor and even have a foot rest if you can't lower your chair, for example.

Pillow or a rolled blanket, or even in this picture, a stuffed animal. Sit on the front of your chair, or sitting on it if your chair is uncomfortable, or you just need to be higher up, or you can use it as a back support. Lastly, best thing for your ergonomics is not staying in the same position for a long period of time. Try to get up and move, take a break. Maybe go for a walk. This picture is yoga, stretch a little bit.

Maybe even get out of the house a little bit. Different scenarios. Now we move on to [NOISE] make it your own. Then I have a secret code word which is be involved, which I really like this word, be involved, because we can play into this. You're studying from home, you're students writing those long essays. Be involved in your life. Be involved in your office.

Meaning, what do I need to make this comfortable? How can it be comfortable for me specifically? Think about how much time you're going to be spending here. Make it somewhere you enjoy being. Get creative with fun colors, plants or candles, a happy light or a stress ball, even those fidget spinners or anything to fidget with, pictures of your pets, family, or friends.

But again, it's going to be different for everybody. White walls for me, I don't have very many things going on. That's comfortable for me. But figure out what's comfortable for you and add that into your home office. [NOISE] Let's discuss. From what we just talked about in the chat or even out loud, what's one step you can take the next week or even the next few days to set up your home office and make it your own or even make it more ergonomic and comfortable?

I see some people like the box idea, pillow for your tush. Anything else? Or some other things that you can do? Come on up? Desk hammock for your feet. I've seen those on Amazon. I was considering that. AC, definitely. Get up and walk around every so often. I highly recommend it. Awesome. Mini fridge by the desk.

[LAUGHTER] I wish I could do that.

These are all great things that you can do. Moving on, it's not just about setting up your home office and what you want in it, but what you do while you're working or studying. Let's manage our time in this section. Having a place where you work, where you feel comfortable and focused is a major step in being a successful student. Now, comes focusing and using your space. Let's think about some concerns about working from home.

A lot of the questions come up, how can I stay focused at home? What about the distractions? Food, laundry, pets, kids, cleaning, distractions. How important is time management to your success in class? What do you-all think? How important is it to you?

Ten out of ten, very key for global students. All caps. It's very important. How do you currently manage your time? We'll go through that a little bit. Calendars.

Is there anything else?

Daily planner. Even sticky notes, creating to-do lists, online calendars, physical calendars. Some people say I don't or winging it. Something else, other things. Let's talk about different types of time. What we see here, there's work time, leisure time, activities of daily living, and sacred time.

We're going to go through and discuss what each of these mean. [NOISE] Work time, it's a time to be productive. It's a time to be active in your work or studying, and it requires a lot of adequate energy. The goal of work time is to produce tangible results. What kinds of things happen during work time for you?

FEMALE 2: Oh my gosh, Andrew can you repeat the question? [LAUGHTER]

ANDY SONG: What kind of things might be working during work time for you? I see lots of emails. Remembering last minute things and then working on them probably. Anything else?

FEMALE 1: [? Procrastinate ?] To get started on other things.

ANDY SONG: Yeah. Running through assignment details, planning days. More specific answers. Just schoolwork. Could be during work time, cleaning your house or apartment, or you're working towards a goal. Working on your job and even planning an event could be examples of work time. Then leisure time. It's sometimes referred to as free time. It's a time to be creative, playful, explore, and be entertained. My leisure time is self-fulfilling, and it's not about goals or results. What things are you doing for leisure time?

FEMALE 1: Stretching.

ANDY SONG: Stretching, knitting, hiking, reading, gaming, bath. These are all great examples for leisure time. Others could be watching the series on Netflix, playing a sport, or attending a sporting event, or even just hanging out with friends. Then procrastinating more time. We can call that a break.

Then activities of daily living time, ADLs. It's time spent to take care of oneself and others. Some tasks are vital, some tasks are self-enhancing. You don't have to do it, but better if you did. The goal of ADLs is lifestyle structure. What things happen during ADL time for you?

Preparing meals, dishes, cleaning, cooking, laundry is a big part of it, paying bills, meditating, walking the dog, feeding the animals, feeding yourself are great examples. Then a lot of the times, we don't factor in time for ADL tasks. But when you add up the time it takes to do

laundry, go grocery shopping, cooking, those things actually take a lot more time than people think and anticipate. [NOISE] I just reminded someone to switch their laundry, awesome. But ADL time now will count after. Sacred time. This can be focused on self-reflection. Reflecting away from self, toward being part of a larger whole. Relationship or communication with the higher power or something else.

It's a time where you have to yourself to clear your head, and just do a bit of self-reflection. It can have multiple goals, and it depends on what you want out of it. It can be time focused on self-reflection, reflecting away from the self, towards being part of a larger whole.

It doesn't have to be a religion based. It can be your meditation. But some people do use religion to achieve that. Some don't, neither as well. Are there any other focuses for sacred time that you can think of?

Going for a walk, meditating. Someone is moving meditating to this category? Yes. If we're trying to clear our heads, what types of things might we be doing? Yoga, meditating could be part of this. But what are some other things? Journaling? Shut the phone off and engage with your friends?

Taking a nap organizing your mind, refocusing. Even practicing mindfulness, is a huge part of sacred time. Maybe a specific cultural or spiritual practice that's designated for mental clarity, and even nature walk. Here's some time management tools to help you keep track. Here's a little to-do list for specific tasks.

One major issues with effective time management is that, we sometimes fail to document all of our obligations. We don't write it down a lot of the times. It's oh, I thought of it, I'm going to do it. We always assume that we will keep track of time of it in our head. This is where poor time management skill begins. If we're going to maximize our time management skills, we have to have an organized method, for keeping track of all things we have to do.

There's that task list, you have your calendar, and you have an online calendar. You can also incorporate your work time, leisure time, ADL time, sacred time into these schedules. Having these will definitely help prevent double booking. Then don't forget about buffer time. If we're going to schedule, or say grocery shopping at 7:00, and then writing an essay as 7:30. Well, what if you grocery shopping for 30 minutes, and you still have to drive home. Is that buffer time that we need? Building a time to take breaks.

Give you time to hit the snooze button one or two times. Also building time for unfortunate events. Students shouldn't wake up every day assuming or waiting for something bad to happen. But every now and then, we experience a series of unfortunate events. The dog has to go to the vet. Your battery in your car goes out, twist your ankle, and it throws off your schedule a bit. Allow a bit of flexibility so that in this event, and unfortunately when it comes up.

You can easily move some things around, and adjust your schedule or to-do list, based on what happened. Some things don't go as planned, you don't have a jam-packed schedule, you include snooze time, commute time in unfortunate events. Then another one is the Swiss Cheese Approach. This is, whenever you find yourself with some extra time, do a smaller part of a larger task.

Maybe if you're writing an essay. If you have a little bit of extra time, write out some notes on what you want to write about. What are these arrows? Please ignore the arrows. Say you get to your class early, you can make your grocery list. Or you have a 30-minute car ride, listen to an audio book for your class. You have a 50-minute class that was canceled, create that time for extra study time for the next exam. Then if you have a snow day, well, online probably won't have snow days. But in unfortunate day where you don't have class, which also probably wouldn't be unfortunate for some people, start something else, start on a bigger project. Then the Pomodoro Technique. This is a great technique for time management. It breaks down to, you focus for 25 minute, have a break for five minutes, and then so on. Then you end on focusing for 30 minutes. Your total focus time is an hour and 45 minutes, your total break time is 25 minutes. This is a particularly effective tool for adults with mental health issues like ADHD, and mild forms of attention deficiency.

With these five-minute breaks, 15-minute break, what could you be doing during this time? [NOISE] Bathroom. That was quick. [NOISE] Stretch, get up and pace around, get away from your office little bit, change that scene. Perfect. Short meditation, yeah. Even breathing exercises are great during this time. Get fresh air. Then use technology for good. The day that we live in, a lot of people are always looking at the phone, or using some technology. Why not use it to benefit you? Here's some apps called Track it. You can track it with these apps. The first one, I don't want to pronounce it along, you can read it.

Is a habit building and productivity app, that treats your life like a game. You can make goals such as drinking eight cups of water, go into the gym. Within the game, you get rewards and punishments to motivate you. There's also a social network to inspire you. Productive, is an app that helps you build a routine. Life changing habits, set personal goals, track your progress.

Then ATracker, is a time tracking app. It creates reports in a pie chart, in a bar chart, whatever chart you want, that you can share via social media, and you can also export the data, and just understand what you're using your time for. Then blocking it. Freedom and Offtime. These are apps that can pick websites to be blocked for that certain amount of time, and disable it from creating those distractions.

Then organizing it, to-do list or todoist, Wunderlist, Remember The Milk, which is a great app name. These are apps that help you plan and prioritize your tasks, and also send you reminders. Then, it's like Remember The Milk. This app actually sends you a text message, or emails reminders, letting you know that you have something coming up, because everybody get texts.

These are really great ways that you can use your phone for good, and have that time management. Now, you have the ability, create your space, make it comfortable, make it your own, and I have the skills how to manage your time. That's all I have for you. Thank you. I will be here, if you have any questions.