

**Center for Student Leadership
eLEADER Stress Management**

Case Studies

1. You are feeling overwhelmed by the responsibilities of your organization, your classes, your Arrupe placement, and pressures from family and friends. Your mother just called to say your father has been laid off his job. You've gotten only a few hours of sleep each night over the past few weeks and rarely think about what you eat. You have an important exam in your major for which you haven't done most of the reading. You need to do well in order to maintain your financial aid. You have your weekly organization staff meeting tonight, which usually runs over to about 3 hours. You are considering canceling it.

Discuss your thinking about how to approach the immediate stressors of your exam tomorrow and meeting tonight. What are some ways you might begin to lessen the stress you feel from other sources?

2. As the director of your organization you have been feeling like you've been pulling more than your fair share of the weight of the organization. When you accepted the position, you had ambitious plans. While your staff was verbally enthusiastic, they have not matched their words with devoting time to your goals.

Check in with yourself; how might you reduce your stress level?

As you look at your staff, what signs of stress do you see in them and what are some ways you can help them respond?

3. You have been involved in a significant relationship for 3 years. This relationship means a lot to you, but you wish your partner would be more understanding of your other commitments. He has been getting increasingly irritated with how little time you have for him and has given you an ultimatum--either step down as director of your organization or lose the relationship. One of the problems you have with your partner is that he drinks far more than you and smokes marijuana. Being with him is time-consuming and you can't afford to be hung over. In addition, your parents have been critical of you because your grades have fallen. They think you should drop your leadership position so you can concentrate on your academic work. On top of these pressures, some of your staff have been complaining that you are spread too thin and aren't providing enough leadership.

What steps can you take to respond to these conflicting pressures?