I love this reminder that we have to shift our expectations for productivity while we are working and learning and surviving at home. We all need to re-establish some structure to our days and to find ways of balancing work and personal needs while stuck inside. Even if you are one of the many essential workers still leaving the house, you need to figure out how to balance the stress and worry with self-care and self-compassion.

It can be challenging to stay motivated or structure your day when everything has moved on-line and you had an unexpectedly long Spring Break. Even though it feels as if everything has been cancelled (so sorry about graduation, seniors!) – you still have obligations and responsibilities and deadlines.

It can be really helpful and important to set expectations and goals for yourself around work, self-care, school, relationships, etc. But to also be kind and compassionate with yourself about those goals and expectations. We are all sitting in this gap between expectations and reality. Stop beating yourself up over it! None of us can really be on top of everything in all ways all the time.

I have struggled with staying focused on work, but since I’m getting paid, I’ve had to stay on top of it. In contrast, I have used up all my patience for my crafting, puzzles, Netflix, and cleaning. This doesn't mean that I've finished any of these projects. My dining room table is covered with sewing supplies to make masks and maybe a T-shirt quilt. All the fabric is crowding out the 1000-piece puzzle that has a border and few other pieces in place, but has really been abandoned and should be put away. I have 17 series “to continue watching” on Netflix (don’t worry, I have finished Tiger King) and my bathroom is spotless, but I lost motivation to keep cleaning past that. I’m guessing that some of you are in a similar situation.
School has been back in session for a while and you might now be realizing that you haven’t logged into D2L for some time. It is time to stop getting distracted by all the random things around your home, and start focusing on school and completing this semester.

**Tips:**

- Set an alarm for a reasonable time in the morning and then actually get out of bed and leave your bedroom.
- Check in with yourself: are you a morning person? A night owl? A mid-afternoon productivity machine?
  - Make yourself sit down and look at D2L and work when you are most likely alert and productive.
- Set a reasonable schedule for yourself with some flexibility
  - Every day, you spend at least one hour per day doing something in the following:
    - School
    - Exercise/movement
    - Cleaning or taking care of something in the household that needs to be done
    - Connecting socially with friends and family
• You may need to spend more time on school or something else each day. But if you meet this minimum amount of time on each of these areas, you have had a successful day and can celebrate you!

• Look ahead at the last few weeks of the semester and make a schedule with your assignments and due dates.
  o Put that schedule on actual paper, and then place it somewhere you see when you are working at your computer.
  o Putting it on paper means that you don’t have to log in to D2L to check for these deadlines.
  o If you don’t have an accurate idea of what is due and when, your anxiety might spike and make you feel even worse or overwhelmed.

• Do not be afraid to email your professors to ask for extensions, an opportunity to make an assignment up for credit, or clarification about expectations and questions you may have.
  o We are all dealing with this incredible disruption in our lives and work and your professors are people too. They want to see you succeed and finish this semester and are likely open to working with you to be successful.
  o Remember that if you don’t reach out and ask for an extension, the answer is automatically no. If you ask, the answer may be yes.

Photo source: Michael Scott, The Office

Remember to take care of yourself and to take care of others by washing your hands, wearing a mask in public, do appropriate social distancing, and remembering that your mental health is important! If you need some additional support from the Counseling Center, call (507) 389-1455 (M-F 8:00 am – 4:30 pm) and ask to talk with a counselor about your concerns.