

## When Should You Seek Out Professional Assistance?

Talking always helps - it is a relief to share and to receive caring support from someone else. Friends are a great support, but when you are procrastinating often or are facing consequences from tasks not completed, talking to an adult is a good idea. Seek out professional assistance (from Ms. Beck, or a community counsellor or psychologist) when:

- You have tried the listed strategies and you are unable to break your procrastination cycle.
- You find yourself avoiding situations or tasks like homework, assignments, activities, social events, school, etc. because they cause you to feel anxious.
- You are experiencing other strong emotions or challenges that need to be addressed, e.g. anxiety, depression, a loss, etc.
- Immediately if you have had, or are having, thoughts of self-harm.
- You are engaging in high risk behaviours.

## Who Can You Talk To?

- Ms. Beck (counselling & referral):  
mbeck@mail.vc.bc.ca
- Your family doctor
- Your Teachers & Coaches
- Your Priest

- Your parents & family
- Counsellors & resources in the community (see the Counselling and Support link at Student Services on the VC website:  
<http://www.vc.bc.ca/Student-Services/Emotional-Well-Being-and-Counselling>
- 24/7 Counselling and Referral: [Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia](http://www.vc.bc.ca/Student-Services/Crisis-Intervention-and-Suicide-Prevention-Centre-of-British-Columbia): (604) 872-3311 .
- Catholic Family Services: (604) 443-2200.
- Several self-help books and pamphlets on the topic of stress management and study skills, which both include procrastination, are also available in the Student Services Centre.

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## Procrastination



# VANCOUVER COLLEGE

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### What is procrastination?

Procrastination is avoiding tasks because they cause us to feel anxious. This may be because they are difficult, because we feel like we don't care, or we believe that we are unable to complete the task well. Other causes of procrastination include perfectionism, general anxiety, lack of motivation, unclear goals, disorganization, fear of failure, and/or fear of seeing our true abilities. Sometimes we get so far behind or have so much to do that we feel overwhelmed and don't know where or how to start. Procrastination affects our productivity, the quality with which we complete tasks, our well-being, and our achievement. It can even effect our relationships with others when we don't follow through with our commitments.

When procrastination becomes a habit, it can dramatically affect a person's anxiety level, as well as their self-esteem. Procrastination is a vicious cycle - the more we procrastinate, the more anxious we feel, the harder it is to get started, the more our performance and achievement are affected, and the more problems we create by not completing tasks. Those around us, for example, teachers, parents, coaches, etc. become more and more frustrated and confused about how to help.

### Everyone procrastinates, so what is the big deal?

- Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional. You have enough stress in your life with homework, tests, assignments, friendships, athletics, and all kinds of other commitments and conflicts. Why create more stress in your life?
- Occasional procrastination is normal but can blossom into procrastination as a habit. It can become very difficult to do our work or even to get started. Some individuals become virtually paralyzed to start tasks.
- People around you are always forming impressions of you - your family, your peers, your teachers, etc. Regular procrastination could be perceived as simply not caring or not having a good work ethic.

- Often people who procrastinate regularly come to view themselves as 'lazy' or 'unmotivated'. This can have a significantly negative impact on a person's self-esteem and confidence.
- Procrastination is sometimes linked to anxiety, perfectionism, or other issues. It is important to seek out help for these to maintain well-being.

### What are some strategies I can use to counter procrastination?

- Learn and practice good time management and stress management strategies. Plan your life in advance and follow through with your plans. See the VC pamphlets on these topics at: <http://www.vc.bc.ca/Student-Services/Study-Skills-and-Time-Management>.
- Break larger tasks, particularly ones that cause stress, into smaller, manageable steps and spread these out over time. These smaller steps will seem less stressful, you will gain momentum, and you will feel productive.
- Challenge negative thinking around fears of not doing a good enough job, failing, or not caring. Create and focus on thinking that will help

you to be productive instead, e.g. 'I'll just get started', 'I can revise as many times as I need to', and 'getting started will make me feel less stressed', etc.

- Set attainable goals and think about the positive rewards of completing a task for you, e.g. you won't have to worry about it anymore, your parents will stop reminding you, you will get the marks for the assignment, etc.
- Avoid analyzing whether you 'feel like' doing something. Most of us would rather nap or do something fun than do homework, but it is your job when you are in school and necessary for your learning, progression, and success, so just do it!
- Speak to Ms. Beck or a counsellor or psychologist in the community to learn and practice strategies and to discuss underlying issues such as perfectionism and anxiety.
- Detailed self-help pamphlets on perfectionism and many other topics are available on the AnxietyBC website at: [www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com).
- The Mindcheck app, available on the AnxietyBC website has many helpful tools related to anxiety and procrastination.

