

Coping with Depression: A Handbook for JCCC Students



JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Coping with Depression: A Handbook for JCCC Students

This handbook was created to educate and support students at JCCC featuring a lifestyle approach in the prevention and treatment of depression utilizing the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change protocol created by University of Kansas Professor Stephen Ilardi, PhD. Dr. Ilardi is a University of Kansas professor and is the author of “The Depression Cure”.

Depression is a mental health condition that is very common and treatable. More than 17 million adults have suffered from depression in the past year. 1 in 4 college students suffer from depression and anxiety (NAMI, 2019). The Therapeutic Lifestyle Change protocol emphasizes a lifestyle change approach that can help provide depression relief. **It is strongly recommended that you work with a JCCC Counselor as you work through the steps in this handbook.**

To schedule an appointment with a JCCC Counselor call 913-469-3809 or stop by the 2nd floor of the Student Center inside the Success Center.

JCCC Counseling Center

2nd floor of the Student Center

Phone: 913-469-3809

Email: advise@jccc.edu

Counseling Hours

Mon., Tues., Wed.: 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

Thurs.: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Fri.: 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

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Introduction to Therapeutic Lifestyle Change for Depression

Depression is the most common mental health disorder; 300 million people of all ages suffer from depression (World Health Organization 2019). What is causing people to get depressed more than they used to? Dr. Stephen Ilardi, who developed the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change protocol believes that the world in which we live in today has some elements that are toxic to our mental health and may contribute to depression. Ilardi asserts that our bodies were not meant for the lifestyle that we currently live in. This modern lifestyle often includes lack of sleep, poor diet, lack of connection, and high stress schedules. TLC is a step by step easy to follow protocol that has clinically proven to improve depression. **Before integrating these steps into your life, it is recommended that you see your primary care physician to rule out any medical causes for your depression and to meet with a JCCC Counselor as you go through the content of this booklet.**

Depression is more than just a feeling of sadness; some symptoms of depression might include:

- Loss of interest or loss of pleasure in activities
- Change in sleep patterns
- Feelings of guilt, shame or low self-worth
- Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- Agitation
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Suicidal thoughts

A Note from the JCCC Counseling Center: Remember Three Important Things

1. You matter, and you matter to JCCC.
 2. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of hurting themselves, please take action and get help immediately.
 3. If you believe you are at risk for suicide, immediately go to the JCCC Counseling Center, JCCC Police Department, a local mental health facility — such as Johnson County Mental Health — or the nearest hospital emergency room. Call "911" or call a suicide crisis hotline- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255. Text option – 741741. See the end of this booklet for additional resources.
- Online Suicide Prevention Training - [Visit AskListenRefer.org/jccc](https://www.asklistenrefer.org/jccc)
 - JCCC Counseling Center <https://www.jccc.edu/student-resources/personal-counseling/>

Session 1: Nutrition

Our brains are mostly made of fat. There are two crucial fats that come from your diet:

- Omega-3 and Omega 6

Our bodies need a balanced 1:1 ratio of these fats but on average we get 15 times more Omega-6 than Omega-3.

This can lead to health problems such as depression. Omega-3 comes from leaves, grasses and animals that eat them- anti-inflammatory. Omega-6 comes from seeds/grains and animals that eat them-pro-inflammatory. Depression is an inflammatory illness; an inflamed brain is a depressed brain.

We need to decrease sugar and aspartame which is found in diet sodas.

We also need to increase Omega-3 in our diets. *Why?*

- Helps the brain better use serotonin and dopamine (the neurotransmitters that regulate emotional well-being)
- Has anti-depressant effects
- Helps treat and prevent some inflammatory conditions

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in:

- Natural plants that free-range animals graze on
- In the meat of free ranging animals that eat those plants
- Grass-fed poultry and eggs from grass fed poultry
- Wild-caught fish

Steps to take

- **Start taking Omega – 3** fatty acid supplement and a multi-vitamin. You can purchase these any drug store, health food store, Sam's or Costco. Dr. Ilardi recommends brands that give you 1000 mg of EPA and 500 mg of DHA per day (this amount has been shown to decrease depressive symptoms and improve mood).
- **Start taking Vitamin D supplement** (guideline 1000 to 2000 IU of vitamin D)
- **Reduce sugar, diet sodas (aspartame causes inflammation in the brain) and fast food**
- **Reduce Omega-6 fats-** use olive oil, avoid fast food, avoid processed food.
- **Increase B-vitamins** – especially B1, B3, B12 and folic acid either with a multi-vitamin or by eating at least 3 servings of green, leafy vegetables each week.
- **Meet with the JCCC dietitian** Claudia Martin-Ayoade cmarti59@jccc.edu

913-469-8500 ext. 3271

JCCC resources: JCCC Dietitian -Claudia Martin-Ayoade, MBA, MS, RD, LD cmarti59@jccc.edu

Adapted with permission from the TLC Laboratory, University of Kansas, developed by Dr. Stephen Ilardi

Session 2: Anti-Rumination -Stop Negative Thoughts

Anti-Rumination Tips:

While it is a normal process to think about situations or problems to find a solution, sometimes we find ourselves obsessing or brooding to the point that the thoughts are no longer serving us well. In general, thinking about situations more than 5 or 10 minutes is not productive.

Rumination or “over-thinking” is repetitive thoughts that trigger feelings of anxiety, sadness or distress. It could be overthinking situations or relationships. It is very common for individuals with depression and anxiety to have reoccurring thoughts that are not productive. Often, we just can’t turn these thoughts off. These feelings can make us feel inadequate and increases anxiety and depression which interfere with problem solving.

Rumination is:

- Worrying or stressing out over something
- A tendency to dwell on petty things
- To wallow in sad feelings
- To mentally replay things that didn’t go the way you wanted

RUMINATION IS A COMMON SYMPTOM OF DEPRESSION. It is like being stuck in a hamster wheel of worry and your brain tells us to stay in that wheel, but it will constantly look for something new to worry about to search for relief and to find reasons for the dread even though it gets you nowhere.

Rumination prolongs and enhances negative thinking associated with depression, interferes with good problem solving, and causes friction with friends and family.

When are the most frequent times you find yourself ruminating?

Dr. Ilardi suggests that there are three steps to fighting rumination:

- 1) **Awareness**- catch it as it occurs and catch it early. The earlier you catch it the less tangled it gets. Ask is this serving me?
- 2) **Decision**- make the decision to stop and choose to do something about it.
- 3) **Redirecting**- find an engaging activity to shift your focus such as social interaction, change in scenery, hobbies, crossword puzzles, doing something with your hands. Get busy doing!

Here are some other strategies that may help you to stop ruminating thinking:

- Schedule time to ruminate (worry time) and set a timer after 10 minutes stop and engage in activity.
- Write down the thoughts, there is something to getting it out of your brain and on to paper. Writing them down decreases the need to ruminate.
- Have a “worry box” write down your worries on strips of paper, if it is a thought you can’t control put it in the box, if it is something you can control keep it out of the box and start a plan to work on them.
- Have a plan in place, be prepared with activities that will help you stop ruminating.
- Ask yourself, are these thoughts valid and accurate?
- Be aware of perfectionistic thinking and try to set realistic goals.
- Practice mindfulness techniques to try and stay in the present.
- Exercise can help with focusing on the task at hand (i.e. biking, yardwork).
- Try to remember just because you think it doesn’t mean it is true.
- Identify triggers, when and where do you start overthinking? What times of the day do you tend to ruminate?
- List things you are thankful for- gratitude.
- Be cognizant of co-ruminating, ruminating together with a friend can decrease our mood.

What 3 things can you do that will stop yourself when you catch yourself ruminating?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Have tos and want tos

When individuals are depressed they stop engaging in activities. Any form of increased activity helps to lift depression

Have tos: Activities we do because we have to – chores, work, study

Want tos: Activities that we find enjoyable that make us feel good.

Engaging in pleasant activities is helpful in treating depression. When doing something pleasurable it illuminates the left frontal cortex, a part of the brain that counteracts depression. Engaging in a “want to” will actually give us more energy to do the “have tos”. Think of 3 enjoyable activities you can engage in if you catch yourself ruminating. Plan one pleasurable activity per day.

3 pleasurable activities I can do

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

“Don’t be pushed around by the fears in your mind. Be led by the dreams in your heart.” Roy T. Bennett

Session 3: Exercise is Medicine

Our bodies are naturally hard wired to want to move. Our ancestors walked everywhere and moved for survival. Studies have shown that exercise has an anti-depressive effect. In fact, several studies have found that exercise is about as effective, if not more effective, than most antidepressant medications. *****Please note: if you are taking medications do not stop taking them without consulting with your physician. For some individuals anti-depressant medications are helpful and necessary. You can still engage in these lifestyle changes to improve your emotional wellbeing while taking your medications.**

To get the anti-depressant affect you will need to get your heartrate up for 30 minutes at least three times a week. Exercise can also improve anxiety!

If you are depressed you may have a lot of trouble initiating exercise, that is completely normal! It can help to start small and think about what type of exercise you might enjoy. Some individuals find meaningful movement more fun than using the treadmill. Find activities you might enjoy such as gardening, hiking, walking outside in nature, walking your dog, intramural sports (basketball, volleyball). Note, being outside in nature also has an anti-depressant effect!

What types of exercise have you enjoyed in the past?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some types of meaningful movement that you might enjoy?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some things you can do to keep you on track with exercise?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Adapted with permission from the TLC Laboratory, University of Kansas, developed by Dr. Stephen Ilardi

Remember, physical activity and mental health are related:

- As individuals become more depressed, they tend to have less energy, so they engage in fewer activities, even those they used to enjoy.
- As individuals recover from depression, their energy levels tend to increase, and they engage in more activities

40 minutes of walking 3 times a week is a great place to start!

Habit formation- Try to commit to some type of movement for 20 days, it will be self-sustaining. You will notice your body will start to want to keep the activity going.

Lots of opportunities at JCCC to get moving!

- **JCCC Lifetime Fitness Center- 1st floor of the Gym room 103 available to all JCCC students, staff and faculty**

<https://www.jccc.edu/academics/credit/hper/fitness-center.html>

Phone- 913-469-4432

Students also have access to the indoor track and basketball courts inside the Gym field house.

You just need your JCCC ID card to access both the fitness center and the field house.

- **JCCC Student Wellness Program**

Free yoga, personal training and wellness coaching for JCCC students

Questions? Contact Tina Pulley studentwellness@jccc.edu

<https://www.jccc.edu/student-resources/student-wellness/index.html>

- **JCCC credit HPER classes offered each semester**

<http://catalog.jccc.edu/coursedescriptions/hper/>

- **JCCC Clubs** – JCCC has several active clubs such as frisbee golf, swing dance, international dance, outdoor rec and more!
 - Check them out here:

<https://jccc.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>

Session 4: Light Exposure

Individual's moods are affected by light exposure. Our ancestors used to be outdoors all day. Today most spend their time indoors and often never see the sunlight. Especially in winter, they go to work or school in the dark and come home in the dark.

Research has shown that light deficiency in winter leads to seasonal depression and that light exposure has antidepressant effects all year round.

Bright light cues the internal body clock (circadian rhythms) daily.

Circadian Rhythms:

- Control body temperature
- Affect the sleep and wake cycle
- Determine hunger levels
- Regulate blood pressure
- Modulate hormone levels

Without adequate light exposure, circadian rhythm can move out of its normal pattern. Restoring circadian rhythm helps improve depression. Exposure to sunlight on sunny days or to a light box can be extremely helpful in providing depression relief. Natural sunlight is best, even an overcast day in winter has more lux than intense indoor lighting. If you are unable to get outdoors it is recommended that you get a light box that has 10,000 lux. You can get a light box on amazon for around \$35. (example - HappyLight)

Goals for exposure to bright light:

- 1) Strive for at least 30 minutes of continuous light every day. Try not to miss a day as progress builds with each exposure.
- 2) Get high intensity light (10,000 lux): either from a light box or sunlight, do not look directly at the light box or sun to protect your eyes.
- 3) Start light exposure within 1 hour of waking up (*unless you often wake up too early).
*if you consistently wake up at least 1.5 hours too early, it is recommended that bright light exposure occurs 3-5 hours before bedtime instead of in the morning.

Tips for getting more light exposure:

- Find ways to integrate light exposure into your daily life. Read outside, study outside or just take a short walk outside during breaks in your day.
- Skip the shades! You will get more benefit from the light if you don't wear sunglasses.
- If using a light box aim frontside within two feet to get full-effect don't look directly at the light.

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Session 5: Enhanced Sleep

Mood is affected by sleep quality and quantity and many people do not get enough good sleep.

Sleep hygiene or having healthy sleep habits includes getting enough quality sleep each night.

How much sleep do I get?

Monday _____ hours

Tuesday _____ hours

Wednesday _____ hours

Thursday _____ hours

Friday _____ hours

Saturday _____ hours

Sunday _____ hours TOTAL _____ hours / 7 = _____

With this amount of sleep I think I (circle one):

- a. Am well rested
- b. Could use another hour or two
- c. Could use a lot more sleep
- d. Get too much sleep

Why is sleep so important?

Irregular sleep habits can cause the onset of depressive symptoms. Often times depression makes it challenging to get restful sleep. Our ancestors 100 years ago got an average of 9 hours of sleep. Today we typically get 6.7 hours of sleep. Some side effects of not getting enough sleep include, irritable mood, low energy, and poor memory. It is important to make sleep a priority!

Dr. Ilardi indicates that delta wave sleep is the term for the deepest sleep we get and is even deeper than REM sleep. Delta wave sleep is more likely to happen after exercise and happens more often in individuals who take Omega 3 supplements. We all need at least 7 hours of sleep each night.

Adapted with permission from the TLC Laboratory, University of Kansas, developed by Dr. Stephen Ilardi

Dr. Ilardi's 10 habits of healthy sleep

1. Use the bed for sleeping only

- Use the bed for sleeping and sleeping only
- If unable to fall asleep after 15 minutes get out of bed and do something relaxing in a different room until you feel drowsy.

Two things I can do when I can't fall asleep:

1. _____

2. _____

2. Get up and go to bed at the same time every day.

- An irregular sleep schedule can get in the way of getting good sleep.
- By setting a specific bedtime you will train your body and brain to fall asleep at the same time every night.

My ideal bedtime and wake-up time _____

3. Avoid naps

- Naps weaken your sleep drive and make it harder to fall asleep at night.

4. Avoid bright light at night

- Turn off or dim lights at least 1 hour before you go to bed, try using dim lamps or candles (battery operated votives are a good idea).
- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible.

5. Avoid consuming caffeine

- Limit coffee to 2 cups per day.
- Remember chocolate and tea have caffeine as well.
- Refrain from consuming caffeine any time after noon, it stays in your system for quite a while.

6. Do not drink alcohol in the evening

- Sometimes alcohol makes us drowsy and helps us initially fall asleep but drinking alcohol at night can cause you to wake up several times and gives you poor quality of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol a few hours before you go to bed.

Adapted with permission from the TLC Laboratory, University of Kansas, developed by Dr. Stephen Ilardi

7. Do not go to bed too full or too hungry

- If you are hungry eat a light snack prior to bed time. If you are hungry you won't be able to sleep.

8. Turn down your thermostat in the evening

- Our bodies recognize it is time for bed when the temperature drops. Most people report sleeping better when it is cooler.
- Turn down your thermostat about 5 degrees when it is time for sleep.

9. Try not to bring your problems to bed with you

- It is common for us to dwell on our worries when we are lying in bed trying to fall asleep.
- Have an anti-rumination strategy ready to fight negative thoughts at bedtime.

Relaxing activities I can use to help fall asleep are:

1. _____
2. _____

10. Don't try to fall asleep

- Wait until you are sleepy to go to bed. It is not effective to worry about how long it is going to take you to fall asleep. You will get impatient and upset if you cannot fall asleep and begin ruminating about not sleeping.
- Remind yourself that getting one night of poor sleep is not catastrophic.
- If you go to bed and have trouble falling asleep get up and move to a different room and do something relaxing like reading.
- Too noisy in your room? Try getting a white noise machine or a fan in your room to block out the noise.

Important Reminders!

- We all really need 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. Try to maintain a regular schedule that will allow you to get 8 hours of sleep per night, make it a priority!
- Remember that sleep is important because chronic sleep deprivation is a huge risk factor for depression.

Session 6: Social Support and Community

Did you know that the caring touch of a friend reduces stress hormones in our saliva? Being around friends and loved ones prevents rumination and lifts mood. Due to the nature of the illness, depression removes us from people. Again, in comparing our modern lifestyle with our ancestors – they lived in tiny villages with extended family nearby. For survival they spent their days hunting and gathering with friends and family. Today people are not as connected to their community. Depression is characterized by withdrawal from other people, nowadays it is easy to withdraw completely. We don't even have to leave our homes for food!

Social support

- Some individuals have a social support they simply want to reconnect with, while others may feel that they do not have anyone they are close to in their lives.
- Ilardi indicates that of American adults, 25% report having NO close relationships.

How social support can serve us

- Anti-rumination
- A presence- someone to do activities with
- Emotional support- someone to confide in

The importance of social support

- Loneliness makes us feel more stressed and less energized.
- Our brain sends us a message that because depression is a serious illness we need to withdraw from social activity, (like when we have the flu).
- The difference is that when we have the flu being alone gives our body time to get better where with depression social withdrawal makes it worse.
- Becoming more socially connected with help us fight and prevent depression.

How to find social support

- Reconnect with friends or family.
- If you are looking for new sources of support, there are a lot of options out there to connect.
- Possible sources of social support:
 - Pets
 - Religious groups
 - Chat rooms online
 - Social organizations such as support groups, sports leagues etc.
 - Volunteer organizations www.volunteermatch.org

Adapted with permission from the TLC Laboratory, University of Kansas, developed by Dr. Stephen Ilardi

Reconnecting with friends

- As hard as it may be, open up to your friends about what you have been going through.
- It may help to explain to them that depression is an illness that causes social withdrawal but that social support plays a major role in recovery!
- Ask a friend to participate in regular activities together.
- Try to avoid rumination by not dwelling on negative thoughts when you are with your friends.
- If your friends or family do not live close by consider reconnecting by texting or calling them.

Who/what are some sources of support I have in my life or could reconnect with?

Who/what are some sources of support I would like to gain?

Building Community

Our ancestors lived in small, social groups that gave them a sense of belonging.

We are inherently designed to live in a community with others. Yet many feel very alone which can contribute to depression.

- We wish to share our lives
- We desire work towards a common purpose
- We long to feel like matter to others

Building a sense of community at JCCC

JCCC offers so many safe ways of meeting new people.

- **Clubs** -Join a club on campus. JCCC offers over 90 clubs and organizations that meet regularly on campus. Search **Getinvolved@JCCC** to find out more! You can also stop by the CSI - Center for Student Involvement in COM 309.
- **Events**- You can also search the campus event calendar by going to the following link: <https://jccc.campuslabs.com/engage/events>
- **Work on campus**- Many students work part-time on campus. It is a wonderful way to meet other students. To find out about jobs on campus click on “explore careers at JCCC” on the bottom right hand corner of the JCCC website. www.jccc.edu
- **Volunteer** -Volunteering is a great way to meet people and can combat depression! It provides a sense of purpose. JCCC offers classes that have a service learning component built in. Go to <https://www.jccc.edu/academics/credit/service-learning/> to find out more!
- **Study groups**- It takes courage to talk to classmates especially when you are depressed! Joining a study group can be a safe and easy way to get to know others.

List two communities at JCCC that you can explore and become involved in.

Building a sense of community outside to JCCC

- **Faith** community – Many religious organizations offer small groups for all ages and interests.
- **Volunteer organizations** – www.volunteermatch.org is a great place to start! Other ideas - Habitat for Humanity, Animal Shelters, Harvesters etc.
- **Interest groups** – photography, art, trail running, ultimate frisbee, frisbee golf
- **Support groups** – many organizations offer free support groups for depression. Talk to a JCCC counselor for help in finding one.
- **Sports leagues** – check out an adult volleyball, soccer, softball, pickleball or basketball league. You can usually find them though local parks and recreation websites such as Johnson County Parks and Recreation.

List two communities in which you can explore by becoming more involved:

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Giving to Others

Just a reminder that when we give to others through an act of kindness of our time, our resources, energy or affection we end up receiving more than we give.

Dr. Ilardi emphasizes that **giving is a potent mood booster.**

Other ideas besides those listed previously include:

- An act of kindness- Think of who in your life you can give something to. For example- sending a handwritten note to someone who is having a hard time or offering to babysit for a neighbor or bringing a meal to a friend who is struggling.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Meals on Wheels
- Ronald McDonald House
- Hope Lodge KCMO – American Cancer Society
- Animal Shelter – walk dogs, push a cat in a stroller or read to dogs

One possibility you might explore: _____

Toxic Relationships

- Most of our friends and family want to be helpful but some unintentionally can be barriers on our path to recovery.
- Toxic relationships usually leave us feeling worse after each interaction.
- These relationships can be improved by:
 - Avoiding co-rumination.
 - Be aware of “negative emotional contagion” – the occurrence of one person’s negative thoughts or anxiety affecting another person’s mood.
 - Focus on a shared activity. For example, attend a concert, a painting class/party, walk your dogs together, hiking.
- Many times, toxic relationships can be salvaged but sometimes a toxic relationship cannot be improved if the other person is critical, hostile, controlling and not healthy for you to be around. It may be best to limit the amount of time spent with that person.

Ask yourself these questions:

Do you feel good about yourself after being with them?

Are you able to set limits about talking to the person about your problems? Avoiding ruminating together.

Do you have toxic relationships in your life? _____

What steps can you take to improve them or limit the impact?

Tips for Setting Boundaries – Setting boundaries can be very difficult and feel uncomfortable but in the long run it can salvage your relationship and help in your own recovery. It is natural to feel guilty or even mean after setting a boundary.

- 1) Know your limits and where you stand.
- 2) Tune into your feelings. Do you feel resentment? Taken advantage of? Feel guilty? If so then a boundary may have been crossed.
- 3) Be direct but compassionate.
- 4) Respect yourself- boundaries are a sign of a healthy relationship and self-respect.
- 5) Ask for help- setting boundaries is a hard thing to do! Talk to a JCCC counselor if you need help.
- 6) You are learning to stand up for yourself and that takes practice!
- 7) An emotionally healthy person will usually respect a boundary.
- 8) It is okay to say no. You are still a good person!
- 9) You have a right to your feelings.
- 10) Setting boundaries is healthy and necessary for your own emotional well being and for your relationships with others.

“Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others.” Brene Brown

Additional Resources

JCCC Counseling Center

Counselors are available by:

- Appointment 913-469-3809
- Walk-ins
- Email advise@jccc.edu
- Quick Question Desk ext. 2641
- Instant Message Advising (JCCC Counseling website)

Counseling is located on the 2nd floor of the Student Center Building inside the Success Center.

JCCC Police

Carlson Center building room CC 115 913-469-2500

Johnson County Mental Health Center

24-hour crisis line 913-268-0156 a line answered by local mental health professionals who assess immediate needs.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

24 hour 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Text option: 741741

JCCC Dietitian

Claudia Martin-Ayoade, MBA, MS, RD, LD

cmarti59@jccc.edu 913-469-8500 ext. 3271

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<http://tlc.ku.edu/> Therapeutic Lifestyle Change website

<https://www.jccc.edu/student-resources/personal-counseling/suicide.html>- JCCC Counseling Center

www.calm.com- mindfulness, meditation, sleep help and more

www.nami.org National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://www.who.int/> World Health Organization

<https://cor.org/leawood/connect/support-groups> Church of the Resurrection LiveWell Emotional Wellness Ministry

For more information or help regarding the steps in this booklet, please contact Jill Konen at jkonen@jccc.edu or stop by the JCCC Counseling Center on the second floor of the Student Center.

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