

# Research finds social support helps students overcome 'task overload'

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Top l-r: James M. Duncan, Mallory Lucier-Greer ;, bottom l-r: Kayla Reed-Fitzke, Anthony J. Ferraro. Credit: James M. Duncan

As emerging adults transition to college they may want to examine the current status of their social relationships as researchers from the University of Arkansas and three other institutions found that perceptions of social support could directly and indirectly be related to

well-being outcomes for emerging adult college students.

"Task [overload](#) is the notion that a person is feeling stressed or overwhelmed by the amount of daily tasks that must be completed in their current environment whether in general, such as household chores, or more specifically for work and school," said James M. Duncan, adjunct instructor in the School of Environmental Sciences in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences..

Writing in the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, Duncan and faculty collaborators from three other universities report that "[social support](#)" can have a meaningful impact on how emerging adults handle perceptions of task overload. This study specifically looked at [college](#) adults up to the age of 25 that are becoming independent and learning how to handle multiple tasks, for example, school work and job responsibilities, during the transition to college and how lack of social support may affect their mental health and ultimately perceptions of task overload.

The paper was recently published in the latest edition (Volume 7) of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*.

The researchers surveyed 185 [college students](#) from a large southeastern university about their perceptions of task overload. They also asked students to self-assess their perceptions of social support and if those perceptions decreased over time. Students were also asked to rate their perceptions of depressive symptomology. Students who had reported decreased perceptions of social support over time also reported high perceptions of depression, and in turn these perceptions of depression were associated with high levels of task overload.

"While launching into college is a time of expected independence and growth in autonomy it is important to remember that maintaining social

bonds and creating new social relationships may help to promote positive [mental health](#)" said Duncan. "Learning to be autonomous does not mean we have to embark on new journeys alone and although there is nothing wrong with building independent behaviors we should still make an effort to meaningfully connect with others to promote our own-well-being."

**More information:** The Role of Social Support in Predicting Depression and Task Overload Among College Students.  
[docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c8fe6e...b6c5fc7d8e73f3cc.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c8fe6e...b6c5fc7d8e73f3cc.pdf)

Provided by University of Arkansas

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