RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING FROM HOME

How to maintain productivity and psychological health during quarantine?

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
STUDENT AFFAIRS AND CAREER OFFICE,
CONSULTING AND TRAINING CENTRE

HOW TO MAINTAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

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1. CONTROL YOUR ANXIETY

We now have access to extremely large and fast-changing information, but if you notice that checking the news is stressing you out, reduce that flow. Set a specific time and duration to read or watch the news, e.g. 30 min in the morning and 30 min in the afternoon. Choose only reliable sources:
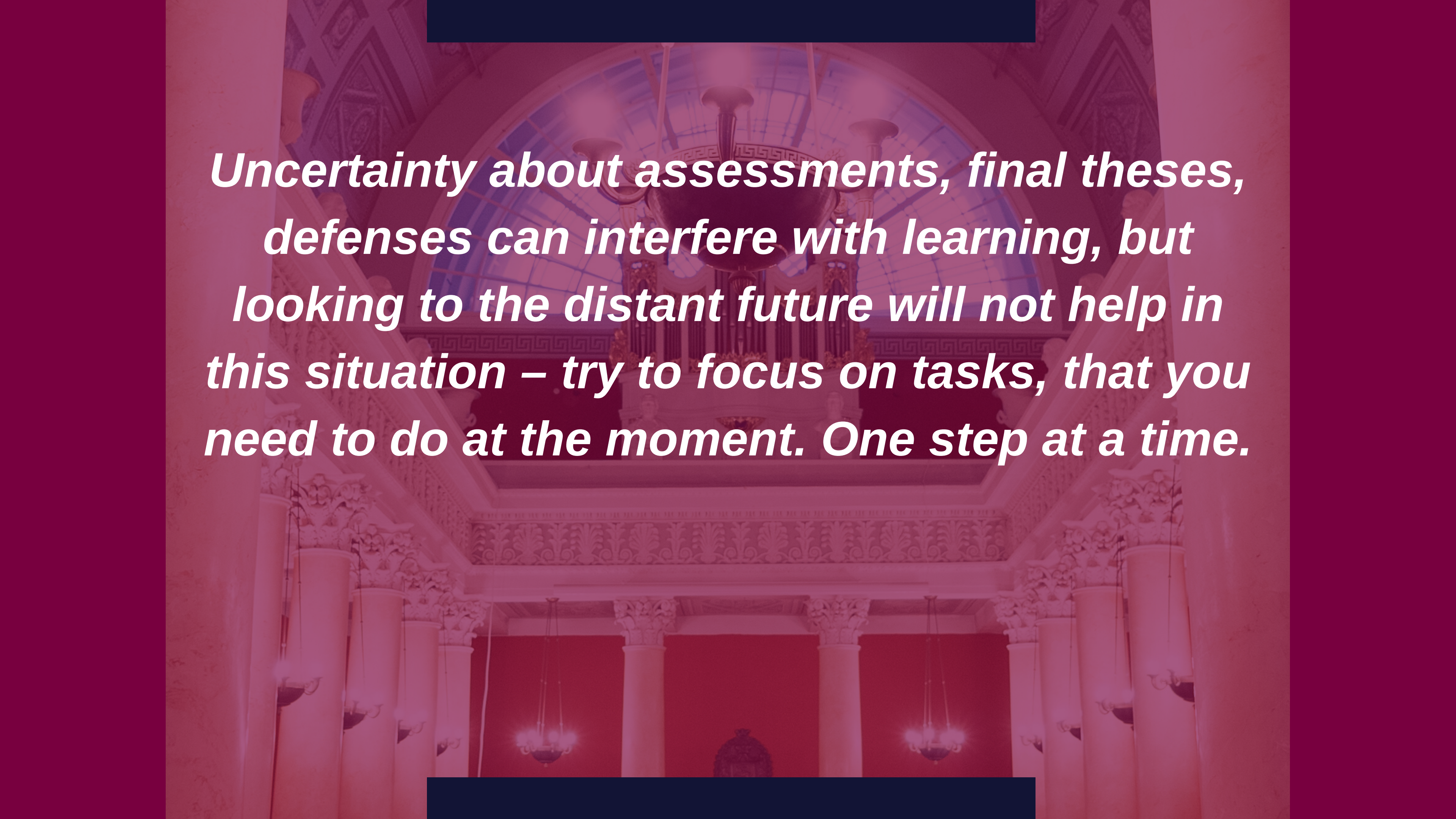
- sam.lrv.lt/koronavirusas
- who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Differentiate between what you can control and what you can't. We cannot control how long quarantine will take, how widely the virus will spread, but we can stay at home, follow hygiene requirements, follow safe distance instructions, thus contributing to a quicker solution to this crisis.

2. MOVE

If you haven't found time to exercise before – start now! A few easy exercises online that do not require any equipment will suffice. This will help you concentrate, feel more energetic, avoid back pain. If you used to exercise regularly before, but you no longer have the opportunity to go to a gym – create a plan (maybe even set new goals) and include sport in your daily routine as before. Seek support from friends – you can agree on when everyone is going to exercise, then it will be harder not to keep the promise.

Uncertainty about assessments, final theses, defenses can interfere with learning, but looking to the distant future will not help in this situation – try to focus on tasks, that you need to do at the moment. One step at a time.

3. COMMUNICATE

Make sure you have enough time to communicate with others every day. You can always invite to chat, have coffee with friends or relatives by video and audio call, share your experiences and feelings.

4. IF NECESSARY, SEEK HELP

If you feel growing anxiety, fear, loneliness, do not be afraid to seek help – understanding the impact of an extraordinary situation, psychologists provide help online (krizesiveikimas.lt, call lines: Jaunimo linija, Vilties linija, etc.).

5. REMEMBER: TAKE CARE OF OTHERS BY ISOLATING

By quarantining you help others. It helps reduce the chances of others getting sick. By such altruistic behavior, you demonstrate social responsibility. Adopting this approach will reduce suffering and endure moments when it is difficult to understand why all this is necessary.

6. SEE OPPORTUNITIES

Look at quarantine as an opportunity to devote more time to your hobbies, self-education on topics you are interested in, acquiring new skills for working remotely, creativity and self-realization. All of this will eventually end, and you will be able to use new knowledge and skills later!

PRODUCTIVITY

Student Affairs and Career Office
Career consultant Ieva Vasionytė

1. ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY PROCESS

Listen to lectures when they take place, it will take less effort than finding time to watch the video later. Make notes, prepare for lectures, prepare summaries of what you have heard during the lecture, so you will not lag behind and you will be able to learn consistently.

Our habits are shaped by the associations we create. For example, if your pajamas are the clothes for sleep, weekends and / or illness, it is very likely that you will feel drowsy, tired and not in a mood to work

2. CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Here are some ways you can build productivity associations:

- Work only at the desk, leave the bed for sleep and relaxation.

- Dress for your study time at home the same way you would if you went to the University.

- Have only the items you need on your desk. Think carefully about whether you need a phone at this time.

- If you enjoy listening to music while working, choose one that you don't listen to in your free time. This playlist will help the brain get ready for work. Idealy the music should be without words.

- Be careful with caffeine. It increases productivity for physical and low-thinking tasks, but it doesn't help with problem solving or creativity.

3. HAVE AN AGENDA AND STICK TO IT

- If you have never had an agenda, implement it in small steps. For example, you can start by having breakfast, lunch and / or dinner at the same time (this may not necessarily be eating, it can be lectures or other regular activities).
- After a few days, when it becomes easy, "add" other activities to your agenda. For example, after lunch spend 2 hours having a learning session; after dinner end your work day and plan your leisure activities.
- Think when you feel most productive during the day, plan your learning for that time, and free time when your ability to work falls.
- Include breaks and free time on the agenda. Breaks will help to relax, and free time on the agenda will make it more pleasing to the eye. You can also use mobile applications such as Pomodoro or Forest to plan work and breaks.

4. KNOW WHAT STEALS YOUR ATTENTION AND TIME

Below is a list of the most common attention and time thieves, and how to control them:

Mobile phone: Switch off mobile data while working and place the phone at the other end of the room. If there is an impulse to check your phone, you will have enough time to catch yourself going for it and stop.

Social networks and other:

- limit the time you spend in them;
- check the phone only during breaks;
- create separate accounts on your computer, one for work (without saved passwords to social networks, games, and movies) and another for leisure.
- use apps that restrict the use of selected web pages or mobile applications, such as: SelfControl App, Cold Turkey, FocusTime.

Food: Plan the time for eating and snacking. You will be less tempted to do it constantly. Avoid working next to the refrigerator.

Organize: On a weekend get rid of everything that annoys you. If you do so, you won't be distracted by a dusty table or socks protruding from the drawer when you are studying.
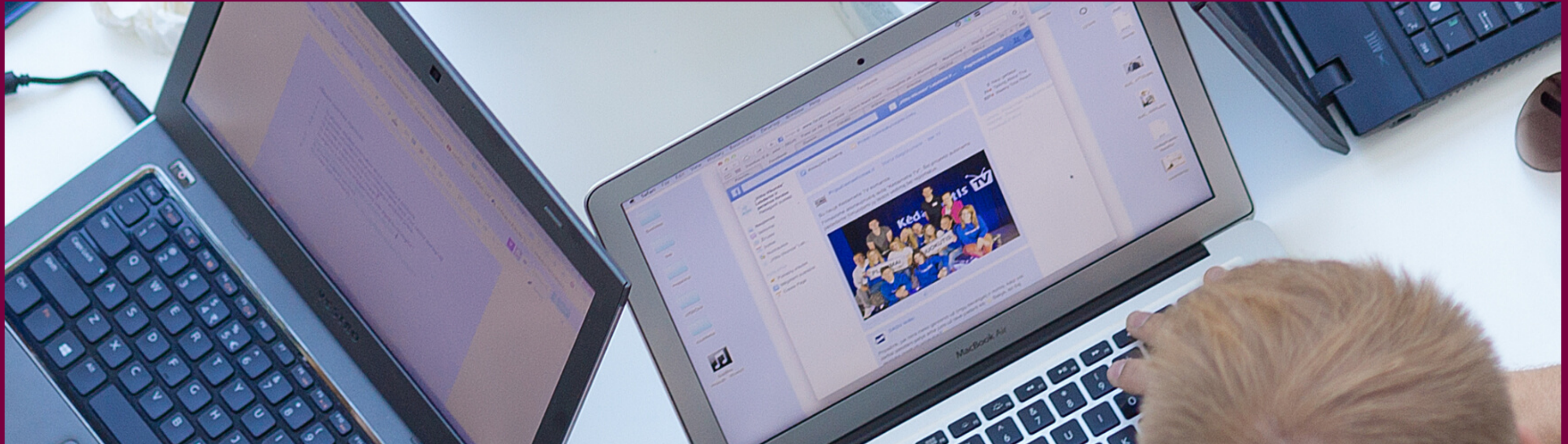
5. KNOW THE REASON FOR PROCRASTINATION

There are three main reasons for the procrastination:

- **Don't know where to start**: start with a plan. Divide the work into smaller tasks, predict how long it will take for each to complete. Ideally, this should not be longer than 30 minutes per task.
- **Don't understand the task:** start by naming what can help you understand – textbook, online video, friend, professor?
- **Bored (or other unpleasant emotions):** try to come up with three scenarious how you can apply this knowledge in real life. Ask yourself if you really need to do that task. Maybe it's not worth the trouble? If that doesn't help, come to terms with it. Sometimes in life you must do unpleasant tasks as well.

Remember, the hardest part is getting started. Agree with yourself that you will sincerely work on a task for 20 minutes, no matter how hard it may be or how much you don't want to work. Usually that's enough to get us started. If that won't be enough, at least you'll have some progress done.

YOU CAN RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY DURING THE QUARANTINE:

CAREER COUNSELING
Career counselor can help you find a way to solve the difficulties of studying at home. Register: careercentre@vu.lt

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE
More information about the possibilities of psychological help can be obtained at the Counseling and Training Center: kmc@fsf.vu.lt or +370 5 268 7254

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE
Academic counselor can consult concerning the study process during quarantine. Contact us at ask@vu.lt or +370 5 219 3144