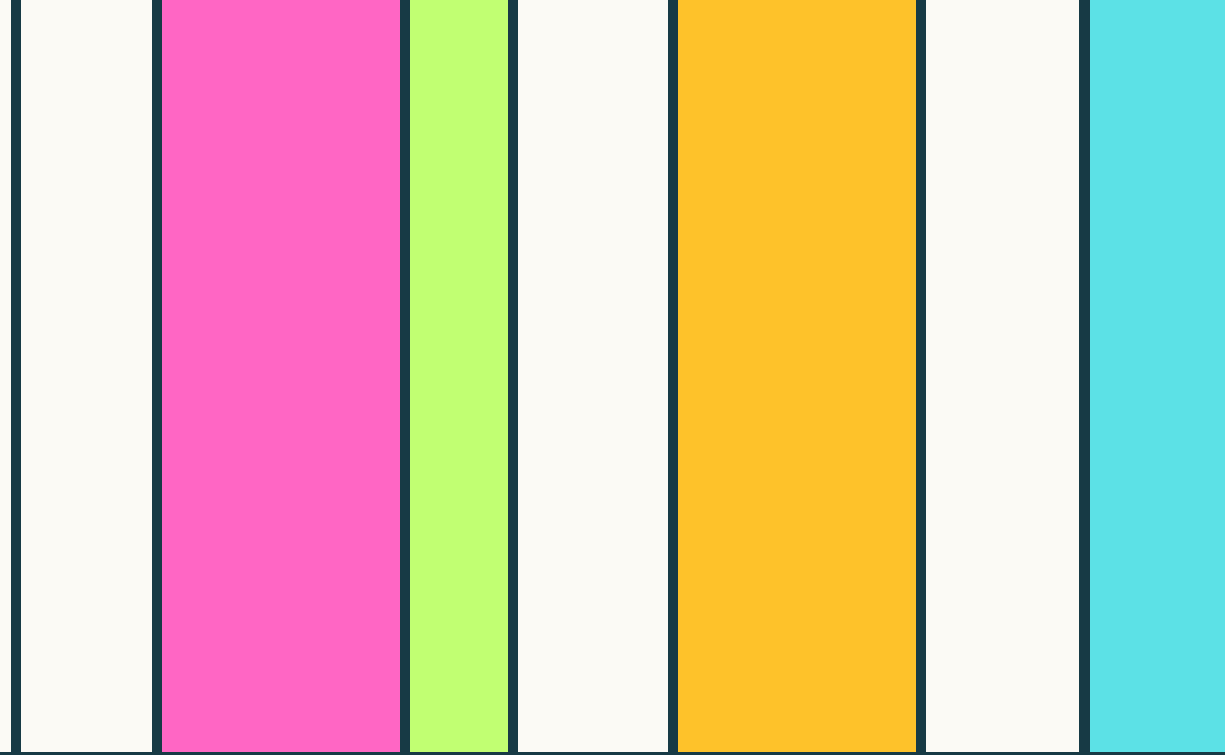


WHAT IS TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER?



WHAT IS TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER IN THE CLASSROOM?

Tech Frustration Spillover (TFS) refers to a state of cognitive overwhelm that can occur when a student is struggling with technology or digital tasks. This overwhelm may sometimes result in displaced frustration or emotional reactivity directed toward a helper, instructor, or another classmate, rather than the actual source of the technical difficulty.

IS TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER AN ACCEPTABLE REASON FOR DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR?

No. While cognitive overwhelm and frustration are recognized as human experiences, they do not excuse disrespectful or inappropriate behavior. Each student is responsible for their conduct and communication in both Zoom and in-person classroom environments, even when experiencing stress, confusion, or frustration.

HOW IS TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER HANDLED IN A ZOOM CLASSROOM?

In a Zoom classroom, the instructor will notify the student when tech frustration spillover occurs or if noticing inappropriate language or emotional reactivity to a class task. If a student begins to express frustration inappropriately, may be muted if needed until they are calm and able to resume appropriate participation. The initial mute at 2 minutes or in place only as long as necessary to return to classroom conduct. The instructor may recommend a short reset or pause before the student re-engages with the class task or activity.

HOW IS TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER HANDLED IN AN IN-PERSON CLASSROOM?

In an in-person classroom, a student may be asked to take a short break, step away temporarily, or shift to a different activity to calm down. In some cases, continued disruption may require the student to briefly leave the classroom space. The instructor may recommend a short reset before the student returns to the learning activity. Student may be asked to review resources Tech Frustration Spillover Info Sheet.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO PREVENT OR MANAGE TECH FRUSTRATION SPILLOVER?

Students with a tendency toward Tech Frustration Spillover are encouraged to take proactive steps to reduce overwhelm and support self-regulation. Helpful strategies include preparing for class in advance, familiarizing themselves with the class support materials. Students can practice mindfulness, grounding techniques, calm breathing exercises to support nervous system regulation to reduce cognitive or concentration overwhelm.

Students are encouraged to support their comfort needs during class time by having water, snacks, and a support contact number available if helpful. Building awareness of attention and concentration limits during computer-based tasks is also important. For example, noticing if 15 minutes of sustained focus feels too long and planning intentional breaks before continuing. Additional supports may include writing simple reminders on an index card or setting phone reminders with cues such as "pause, breathe, reset" to use when early signs of overwhelm arise. Having a preset "reset word" or "affirmation sentence" can help in the moment. These strategies can help students recognize earlier, take appropriate breaks, and return to learning with clarity and calm.

RESOURCES

- uclahealth.org/uclamindful/guided-meditations
- health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/six-relaxation-techniques-to-reduce-stress
- insighttimer.com

