
Lighten the Load: Helping Overwhelmed Harvard Students

Psych 1809 Group 11

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Recommendation for Students

Shorten length of comps to no more than 2 months

Effects of intense social evaluation:

- Largest cortisol activation, and when chronic can lead to poor physical/mental outcomes
- Reducing evaluative time allows for greater sense of belonging, which is associated with lower perceived stress in college

(Dickerson & Kemeny 2004, McEwen 1998, Hammen 2005, Civitci 2015)



Recommendation for Faculty

Ban assignments over breaks

- Faculty should be mindful of the need for students to take periodic breaks from academic stress.

Effects of breaks:

- Taking breaks is important for mental, physical, and emotional health and student performance
- Spending breaks thinking about work is detrimental to stress recovery



(Fritz et al. 2013, McIndoo et al. 2015, Miner et al., Vandevala et al. 2017)

Recommendation for Administration

Close Lamont Library at midnight on weekdays

- To encourage students to prioritize sleep, Lamont should mirror Widener's policy and close at midnight.

Effects of sleep deprivation:

- Stress and mental exhaustion
- Cognitive, emotional, and somatic complaints
- Steady state sleepiness

(Dinges et al. 1997)

