

RELAXATION, RESOURCES, AND REALISTIC COMPS

Recommendations to reduce stress at Harvard

Administration: Relaxation

Add wellness rooms to all houses and every freshman yard to give students a safe space to practice relaxation and mindfulness

- Meditation/mindfulness reduces stress and the negative effects of stress, such as increased blood pressure, loss of focus, and suppressed immune system
- Relaxation techniques, such as breathing, muscle relaxation, relaxing music/sounds, and imagery, have been shown to decrease stress levels
- Wellness rooms provide a safe place to practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques

Faculty: Resources

Provide examples and or practice for major assignments (ex: practice exams, practice essays); include feedback and answer keys

- Clear expectations for exams and essays provide students with a concrete resource to cope with academic stress
 - Setting expectations also gives students more control over the outcome
- Situations in which people do not think they have the resources to cope and feel a lack of control have been shown to be stressful

Students: Realistic Comp Process

Each comp process must have its own clearly defined rubric of success and must provide feedback for why an individual is cut from an organization

- This shifts the comp process to focus on competency and effort rather than the social aspects and who-knows-who during the comp
- This transparency allows for reduced anxiety related to social pressure
- Feedback allows for a greater sense of control in case a student wants to re-comp