

PSY 1809: The Science of Stress

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SCIENTIFIC STRESS- REDUCTION POLICIES for Harvard



ADMINISTRATION

A **meditation center** will promote daily mindfulness practice among the student body, and combat the 'always-on' academic culture

FACULTY

Earlier deadlines will discourage students from staying up late or all night to finish assignments

STUDENTS

Keeping a **gratitude** journal or an app such as Presently can help promote clarity and reduce reactivity to stressful events


PROPOSALS:

1. meditation center: 

a building on campus, preferably near nature, that students can visit at any time for peace and meditation

2. daytime deadlines: 

avoiding late night and early morning deadlines will prioritize student sleep and relaxation

3. gratitude: 

practicing daily gratitude is an effective way for students to manage their stress levels during busy times of the semester

- MBSR: anti-depression and anti-anxiety effects¹



- social support and community protect against harmful stress outcomes²

- promote healthy nighttime routines, such as winding down

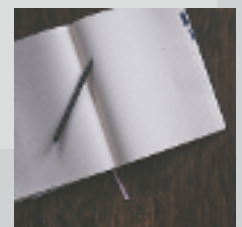
- positive relationship between sleep and academic performance³

- more sleep, less stress⁴



- Gratitude journals help lower reactivity to stressful events⁵

- acts as a buffer against depressive symptoms⁶



¹ Marchand, W. R. (2012): Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, and Zen Meditation for Depression, Anxiety, Pain, and Psychological Distress

² Cohen et al. (1985): Measuring the Functional Components of Social Support

³ Trockel et al. (2010): Health-Related Variables and Academic Performance Among First-Year College Students: Implications for Sleep and Other Behaviors

⁴ Meerlo et al. (2008): Restricted and disrupted sleep: Effects on autonomic function, neuroendocrine stress systems and stress reactivity

⁵ Kretz et al. (2014): Counting One's Blessings Can Reduce the Impact of Daily Stress

⁶ Deichert, Chicken, and Hodgman (2018): Appreciation of Others Buffers the Associations of Stressful Life Events with Depressive and Physical Symptoms