

Recommendations to Reduce Stress at Harvard

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STUDENTS

- **Practice Positive Stress Reappraisal**

- Adopt a **growth mindset** towards stress rather than a fixed mindset
- View stress response as your body **preparing** you for **challenges**

Scientific Basis:

- Individuals have an increased risk of premature death when they have high stress and perceived stress (Keller, 2012).
- A growth mindset towards anxiety can buffer effects of psychological distress (Shroder et al., 2017).
- Reappraisal improves cardiovascular and cognitive responses to stress (Jamieson et al., 2012).

FACULTY

- **Remove Uncertainty, Create Control**

- Seek **student feedback** throughout the semester
- Set a concrete policy for **returning graded work** and providing **work extensions**

Scientific Basis:

- Grading and returning work in a timely manner can reduce stress that comes with the uncertainty of outcomes (Grupe, 2013).
- When individuals feel they have more control over their outcomes their physiological responses to stress decrease (Breier et. al., 2003).

ADMINISTRATORS

- **Strengthen Social Environment**

- Provide coping strategy **resources** (i.e. weekly or monthly email format)
- Have regular **Open Conversations** with students and/or faculty to talk about the **importance of mental health**

Scientific Basis:

- Creating a sense of social integration through sending coping resources and having open conversations can help increase immune function (Cohen et al., 1997).
- Men who are more socially integrated are at a much lower risk of developing heart disease (Orth-Gomer et al., 1993).