



Psychology

Newsletter



Happy Easter and welcome to the April issue, which may be one of the last issues for a while!

This month the focus is on exams and the pressure all students are put under. Don't worry we have an article all about relaxation during this time period, including events on campus that can help!

While this is a short issue, a piece including tips and advice from different students are inside!

This being my last issue, I would just like to say I have thoroughly enjoyed working for the newsletter, and hope that it can continue to live on!

Managing Exam Anxiety - top tips p.2-3

60 second interview... p.4

Advice and tips from students p.5

Managing Exam Anxiety

by Veronica Savva

For some people it is not a big deal, but for most exam period is stressful. Stress increases our adrenaline to make us bother to sit down and study. However, excessive stress does the opposite and leads to many other negative effects, such as feeling tense, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. It might seem that your whole future is going to be determined in a couple of dates, regardless of all the hard work you have done over the years. Exams are nearby, and if you have not yet started preparing for the hard work and challenges that you are going to face, there are a number of different support services on campus as well as practical things you can do by yourself. ■

A common mistake many students make during their finals period is to eat poorly and unhealthy. Energy drinks, junk food, and chocolates often replace normal meals to boost energy. All you need is long-lasting meals and snacks of complex vitamins, carbohydrates, protein, in conjunction with a good **night's** sleep. Wake up early and start your day with a good breakfast; you may either have porridge, cereal with milk, an omelette, or toast with honey or peanut butter. Nutritionists strongly suggest having a snack about 2 hours after a main meal. Vegetables and fruits provide much-needed minerals, ions, vitamins, and liquids, and they contain fructose and healthy sugars that your body can convert into energy. For example, apples, bananas, avocados, and berries form the top snacking fruits. It is also essential that your main meal constitutes carbohydrates and protein, as these are the most important sources of energy for the human body, they keep your stomach full for a longer time, and activate your brain. Chicken, tuna and salmon are the healthiest and best sources of protein, and it is preferable to eat them with rice, pasta, or salad. In addition, it has been proved that consuming water has a physiological effect on thinking functions that lead to improve exam performance. A healthy diet in conjunction with a good sleep of about 8 hours is significantly beneficial for your performance and energy. For this reason avoid consuming energy drinks or coffees late during the day that will affect your sleep. ■

Furthermore, you are much more likely to remember what you have read when you take plenty of breaks. Breaks are essential in order to make you feel relaxed and able to absorb more information when you continue. Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind and relieve stress. As tiredness and stress can make you feel frustrated and down, sport activities, chatting with friends, and watching a movie can make you feel much better. In fact, physical health and well-being are interrelated with success and self-esteem, and spending your leisure time with activities and hobbies can help you increase your happiness and enhance your mental performance.



The University of Essex provides a number of different services for the welfare of students. There is a range of helpful University support services **that run on campus, such as Nightline, the Residents' Support, and the Health Centre.**

Also our Student Support team provides advice and help to

students to stay physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy. No matter how small or big your issues are, these services are completely non-judgmental, and operate to support and treat students with respect. More information about these, including locations and opening times, can be found on MyEssex Student Portal. ■

Beyond these, you should also learn to calm yourself down with appropriate and simple techniques. The Mindfulness for Exams workshop is a very popular and extremely recommended 2-hour course that will run in the University on the 21st of April, 28th of April, and 5th of May. This course focuses on using techniques to reduce exam stress and anxiety, and booking (wellbeing@essex.ac.uk) is required. Breathing exercises and meditation are calming techniques that can really help you relax. Deep breathing slows the heart rate, relaxes the muscles and tension, focuses the mind and is an ideal way to begin meditation. Additionally, try to put all your attention in your body parts through stretching, starting from the feet and then slowly move your way up your body. Focusing on your breathing and solely on the current moment is a wonderful way to evolve your meditation habits. ■

If you follow the suggestions given, you are definitely going to do well in your exams. Success is strongly dependent on **one's mental** and emotional health that can also be enhanced through physical activities, good organisation, and with short breaks. Regular exercise will give you more adrenaline in the long run, and will make you feel better able to deal with your stress. A healthy diet and a good sleep will boost your energy and make you feel happier and relaxed. In addition, you can visit a lot of ongoing student services that can significantly help and support you at any time during the day. And remember: **no matter how frustrating it is, failing is not the end of the world.** ■

GOOD LUCK

60 SECOND INTERVIEW

Prof. Rick Hanley

What was your favourite subject at school? Why?

Latin. It turned out very useful for teaching Psychology of Language!

Favourite movie of all time? Why?

John Ford's The Searchers (1956). Your readers may feel that Westerns are old fashioned, but this film has everything.

What is your ideal holiday destination?

Elafonisi beach on Crete in late September. Paradise.

Do you have any pet peeves?

The publicity that the media gives to those buffoons in UKIP.

What is your favourite sport to watch?

This year, I really enjoyed the NFL play-offs. Wonderful athletes and matches with real drama.

If you could be a celebrity for the day who would it be ? Why?

Vladimir Putin so that I could withdraw all of the Russian troops from Ukraine.



Advice from students

For this last piece we asked students from different year groups, what advice they would pass on to the year group below them.

1st year advice - to prospective 1st years (new students)

Be patient when it comes to routines, lectures and classes. It may feel a bit overwhelming at first. Not to mention how to handle the amount of work. Don't worry, you will eventually get the rhythm of it all. Be kind to everyone: you never know who could end up as your new best friend. Also, one shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Be open to new cultures and meeting people from all around the world. Everyone is in the same situation; excited and nervous at the same time. Last but not least, enjoy every moment of what uni life has to offer. Time will pass by too fast, so make the most of it !

2nd year advice - to 1st year students

The best advice to first years now would be to not leave things to the last minute. Take time to arrange your priorities and do the best to keep up with the lectures. Remember that the lecturers are there to help, so if you are unsure about something, book an appointment and ask for help. However, it is also important to make time for socialising and remember to get enough sleep, while you can!

3rd year advice - to 2nd year students

What I have learnt during my three academic years is that being well-organised is the most important thing for success. As you go on, things get more serious, and goals become a priority that motivate you to work harder and harder. However, if I had taken my course more seriously from the first year, I would have definitely attained a much greater overall mark. For this reason, I recommend everyone to work hard from the very beginning, never give up, and enjoy the rest of your university life to the fullest!