

TAKE A



Q. Finals, Stress and Substance Abuse

A. You're in the thick of studying and tests. If you don't get an A on this final paper, the convos with your parents about retaking that class next spring will be less than merry. To say you're stressed is an understatement, but know you're not alone.

Stress causes the brain to release powerful neurochemicals and hormones in response to emotional or physical demands. CRF, a hormone in the brain, initiates the body's response to stress which can produce several uncomfortable symptoms, such as: racing heart, sweaty palms, insomnia, headaches, high blood pressure, etc.

Substances with abuse potential (alcohol, marijuana, opiates/painkillers, and amphetamines/ADHD meds, etc.) also stimulate the release CRF. So while you might feel like a night of heavy drinking will help you relieve stress, popping an Adderall will help you study, or taking a prescription painkiller will take the edge off, think again. Here are a few reasons why:

- 1) Misusing or abusing drugs can make users more sensitive to everyday stress than non-users (NIDA, 2007). It might feel less stressful for a short period of time after using, but your stress could feel much worse after the substance wears off.
- 2) Stress can cause changes to the brain, similar to those caused by addictive substances. Research suggests stress can put people at risk for substance abuse, and more vulnerable to addiction or relapse (NIDA, 2007).
- 3) Not all stress is bad for you! A little stress can actually help you perform better, increase immunity, and motivate you to work harder.

Some tips to reduce stress during the next few weeks: exercise, get sufficient sleep, rest, eat and drink sensibly, meditate, manage your time, set reasonable goals and standards, talk to friends/family, schedule an appointment for a FREE MASSAGE in the Relaxation Station in the Health Education Office on campus (507-389-5689)!

GOOD LUCK with finals and HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

MAVFACT:

Over 28% of Mavericks reported stress has impacted their academic performance.
(NCHA, 2014)



GOT A QUESTION

about substance use?
Email it to: healthservices@mnsu.edu

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO Student Health Services
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