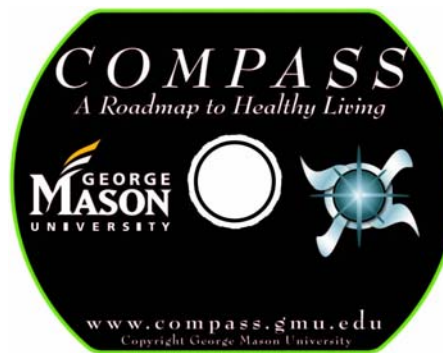


Happy End of the Semester Greetings:

This is the time of year when lots of things are happening.....it's the end of the semester, exams consume us, we're getting ready for a long break from school, and we're transitioning into a New Year. It's also a time for holiday parties and celebrations, for connecting with friends and family, and for catching up on that much-needed sleep. And with all of these things going on, particularly with many of these happening for the first time, it's a time that many people feel a lot of stress. You're at the end of your first semester at Mason (unless you started early) which can be very stressful. PLUS, you're into the exam period – and some papers right at the end of the semester – other potential stressors. PLUS, you're probably wondering about seeing various people during the holidays, especially those you haven't seen for awhile, and thinking about how they have changed (and how they think you might have changed)! And you have time with family members.



COMING SOON! The brand new and improved COMPASS CD-ROM!

One thing that's important throughout this period of the semester and of the year is to KEEP YOUR PERSPECTIVE. A major challenge, particularly during the first year of college, is to learn new ways of dealing with the myriad of situations that you encounter. Many of these situations are new, and others take on new forms.

How to obtain a copy the COMPASS CD-ROM

Check out *COMPASS: A Roadmap to Healthy Living* at www.compass.gmu.edu – this has lots of good information and resources on a variety of topics, all helpful to success as a student and beyond! If you'd like your own copy of *COMPASS*, please email us at compass@gmu.edu. Thanks!

It's certainly like a balancing act, trying to juggle these various responsibilities and issues.

An article from *COMPASS: A Roadmap to Healthy Living* is particularly helpful in this regard. *The Balance Beam of Life: Negotiating Stress And Relaxation* offers some brief insights about the stress that each of us faces. What is important with

this is how we view this, and how we deal with it. According to the author, Dr. Silvestro Menzano, symptoms associated with stress “can be divided into four general areas: physiological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Different people experience different symptoms of stress exhaustion.” He provides examples of these – check these out to see what describes you. Also, Dr. Menzano offers three steps to help reduce your stress:

Step 1: *Assess current stressors/stress levels*

Step 2: *Evaluate and explore options for perceptions*

Step 3: *Make changes to behavior*

Particularly helpful in Step 2 is how you can change your perceptions of stressful events, including strategies of “altering”, “avoiding” and “accepting.” He describes ways of minimizing or changing irrational beliefs, as well as reducing the ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’ of your thinking. Step 3 identifies some specific ways to make changes to your behavior – these include assertiveness, time management, exercise, nutrition, relaxation, laughing, and much more!

Check these out at and use or adapt what works best for YOU: See http://www.compass.gmu.edu/compass_cd_versions/gmu_compass_2007/stress.htm. Also, take a look at some of what Mason is offering this week and next week (see box on this page) – things that may be helpful to relax, blow off some steam, and de-stress!

UPCOMING EVENT AT MASON

Blow Off Some Steam Fest -- Free Concert!
When December 06 @ 7pm and 8:30pm
Where Patriot's Lounge, SUB I, Campus: Fairfax
Description Free Concert Featuring Paper Rival and Between the Trees!
Relaxation Day
When December 9th @ 12pm and 5pm
Where Patriots Lounge, SUB I, Campus: Fairfax
Description Come and study in a quiet and peaceful environment. Free Food, Study Supplies, and MASSAGES!
De-Stress Days
When December 10th through December 15th
Where Campus: Arlington, Hazel Hall Atrium

Finally, as you end this year and move into the New Year, use this as an opportunity to reflect upon where you have been, and where are you going. The traditional idea of making New Year's resolutions can be particularly helpful for new students – what is it that you learned this first semester at college, and now, upon reflection, want to adjust for the next semester? What issues did you face, that you'd like to deal with in a different way in the future? What challenges were overwhelming for you, and how could you address these better in the future.

The first issue of this e-newsletter for Spring Semester will start to focus on these. In the meantime, have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!